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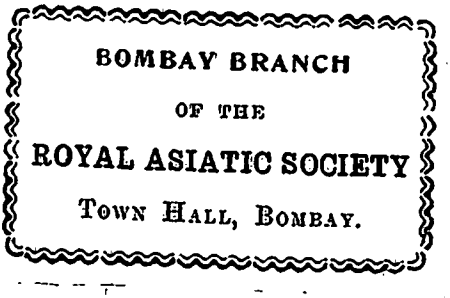

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MEMOIRS OF A ROYAL DETECTIVE

THE LATE EX-DETECTIVE-INSPECTOR HERBERT T. FITCH

MEMOIRS OF A ROYAL DETECTIVE

By the late
EX-DETECTIVE INSPECTOR
HERBERT T. FITCH
(*Of the Special Branch, New Scotland Yard*)

WITH 22 ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

THE late ex-Detective Inspector Herbert T. Fitch, whose first book, *Traitors Within*, received remarkable reviews, tells here of another side of his duties. Surely one of the most romantic figures of our time, Mr. Fitch was constantly selected as Special Branch detective guard to various kings and queens.

Royal appreciation of his services was indicated by many decorations, such as a Cipher Pin from H.M. the Queen, the Orders of Leopold of Belgium, the Red Eagle of Prussia, Isabella the Catholic, Avis of Portugal, the White Elephant of Siam, the Order of Merit of Bulgaria, etc.

In the present volume, Mr. Fitch takes us behind the Palace doors to watch secret comedies and dramas that are the real footnotes to history. We see the Royalty of Europe at work and play, in love and anger. They flit across the pages, "some shadowed by secret enemies, some pursued by madmen, some welcomed by thunderous cheering"—and still subject to all the common passions that we also know.

When Mr. Fitch had almost completed this book, he was found dead in his study chair. Sheets of the story still littered his desk.

So that his tale of these unique experiences should not be wasted, I was asked to conclude the task. For many years I had collaborated with Mr. Fitch in all his

literary work, and every effort has now been made to preserve to the end his characteristic style and apt admixture of anecdote and humour. As it is not easy to take up another's pen, I must ask indulgence for any imperfections that may be apparent.

F. S. STUART.

FOREWORD

By The Baroness Orczy

Is truth really stranger than fiction? As a romantic writer, I suppose I should deny it. As the creator myself of *The Old Man in the Corner* detective stories, it would seem that I should make a critical judge of the prosaic life-story of a flesh-and-blood detective.

So I should, if this story were prosaic. But, when a Scotland Yard man is put in charge of the safety of kings and queens, princes and princesses, in England and out of it, and when, perhaps, any harm befalling one of his royal charges might cause a world situation comparable to that which arose when the Sarajevo Incident occurred in 1914, and plunged the world in bloodshed, then the account of his life and deeds is surely the highest romance of all!

Detective-Inspector Fitch, master of several European languages, tactful enough to give the most turbulent royal personages in the world complete satisfaction by his service, smoother-away of difficulties for distinguished foreigners in a strange land, relentless enemy of anarchists, trusted attendant on our King and Queen, the Prince of Wales in his schooldays, our Princesses at their weddings, is a character that any fiction-writer would have been proud to conceive. But it is doubtful whether the most confirmed romantic among us could have done

justice to some of the incredible adventures which came to him in his quiet work as the guardian of kings.

It is rare indeed that we are permitted to wander freely within palace precincts, as this book allows us to do. It is even more unusual to obtain a close-up picture of the loyal, silent men who stand about the thrones of Europe, risking their lives, should need arise, so as to keep the shadow of the anarchist and the assassin from casting its black menace across the royal way.

Outside England, despite the most strenuous and courageous efforts, that shadow intrudes tragically often. In Great Britain, thank God, it has not come during the last two centuries. So long as there remain to us detectives of the quickness, the skill, the tact and the sly humour of the author of this book, it will never darken our soil.

To say that this autobiography is the unvarnished history of such a man is the finest tribute I can pay it.

EMMUSKA ORCZY.

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CHAPTER I

The guardians of the kings—A significant record—Why the Sarajevo Incident cannot be copied here—"King's shadows" not always welcomed—"The chance of a lifetime"

THE guardians of kings are of many kinds. Here in England, as every schoolboy knows, the person of the Sovereign is protected by His Majesty's Life Guards. Booted and spurred, they sit ready on all occasions to bring their swords whistling from the scabbards in defence of the royal person. At the coronation, when a king lies dying, in State processions, the scarlet and blue of their glittering uniforms may be seen near the King, enclosing him from harm, and awaiting emergency.

Other guardians and protective officials, political, secretarial and household, stand steadfastly between the King's majesty and the outer world. Closest of all, least conspicuous, their very names perhaps unknown to the realm at large, hover certain figures in quiet civilian garb, and in their hands rests the final safety of the man who is England. The King's own personal detective is chief of these.

The uncanny efficiency with which the personal detectives of the Royal Family carry out their difficult task receives its tribute in that no one outside the royal circle ever hears anything about them. Perfect machinery makes the least noise over its work.

But such a precious thing is the safety of our Sovereign

and his guests that Scotland Yard weaves yet another invisible circle about them. The Special Branch of our detective service has many duties. Its anti-espionage and anti-anarchist work I described, to some extent, in my book *Traitors Within.* But it has another and almost more important responsibility—the preservation of that magic wall of safety built around the English throne, and around all those who trust themselves within the shadow of that throne.

Whenever it is considered advisable to add to the safeguard provided by the various royal detectives by placing additional officers at the disposal of the King's household, or whenever a foreign Royalty visits these shores, the Special Branch has the privilege of selecting one or more officers for the royal service. I need hardly say that there is considerable competition to qualify for such service ; and I was singularly fortunate, during my twenty years or so of work in the C.I.D., in being told off for this duty hundreds of times—a choice for which my familiarity with most of the European languages was doubtless partly responsible.

. In addition to acting as Special Branch detective to His Majesty, Queen Mary, the Prince of Wales, and other members of the Royal Family, I was employed in this capacity in guarding King Edward, Queen Alexandra, and members of the Russian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Norwegian, and other ruling Houses. It was my good fortune to get glimpses of the loyal, loving, human men and women who wear the stately crowns, and sometimes, behind the palace doors, to watch enacted, or play a part in, comedies and dramas that were, for obvious reasons, excluded from the Press of the time.

In this book I propose not so much to tell the stories of my adventures as a royal detective, but to offer you, as far as my skill will permit, some of these intimate glimpses into the fairyland of ancient palaces, great State coaches, wonderful uniforms, and strange old ceremonials that still surrounds the name of Royalty. In that fairyland I have learned to reverence and love our present rulers, and to like certain other kings and queens. You shall see why.

It is necessary, so as to avoid confusion, to explain first of all just how the Special Branch detective, told off for royal service, goes about his work.

But perhaps you think that here, in peaceful Britain, kings need no guards? Consider for a moment. Queen Victoria, during her reign, was more than once attacked in public. Once she was actually struck by a club. That was before the formation of the Special Branch.

In the last twenty-five years or so royal persons have been murdered in Serbia, Russia, Italy, Austria, and France. An American President has been added to the bloody list. The King of Spain, with his English princess bride, was almost blown to pieces on his wedding-day. The crack of a revolver in Sarajevo cut short two royal lives and plunged the world into carnage.

But since the formation of the Special Branch no royal person has ever been hurt in Britain. It is a significant record—the more so since England is the place where royal refugees, flying from the murderous clamour of their own people, usually seek sanctuary.

There will never be a Sarajevo Incident in this country. Not because the would-be assassins are oblivious of England but because they are never permitted here to make an attempt on any royal life. They cannot.

Other kings have their Horse Guards, their politicians, and their secretaries, but the Special Branch is unique.

When a foreign Royalty visits England, swift and silent preparations are made to ensure his safety by the detective placed at his disposal. I have filled this post so often that I can tell you precisely what the preparations are.

The port at which the distinguished visitor will land is minutely examined for possible suspects. The local police probably have all the information needed, though sometimes the Special Branch records point a finger of suspicion at a man who is locally believed to be a very model of virtue and probity. There are not a few people in England at present who would almost jump out of their skins if they dreamed that Scotland Yard was so familiar with their affairs as it is.

It will easily be realized that a seaport with a changing population numbering hundreds of thousands is not an easy place to watch. But, so perfect are the police precautions, inquiries can be made into the behaviour of all suspects in such a place, and every possibility of their interference with the royal visitor can be effectually removed in a matter of twenty-four hours.

Sometimes, in the crowd gathered to watch a foreign king come ashore, there are men who are believed to harbour unpleasant thoughts towards that king—fanatics or drug-addicts perhaps, but no less dangerous for that. It has occasionally been my duty to touch one of them quietly on the shoulder and ask him to take himself off. When the foreign king steps on to the gang-plank, cheers of genuine greeting are the only sounds that reach his ears. In England, at least, he need never strain them for the sound of a revolver-shot or an explosion.

Once ashore, the visitor steps into a waiting car and

is slowly driven to the railway station. He passes through thronged streets, where a sprinkling of police keep back the huzza-ing masses.

The King of Spain said to me, on the first occasion when I had the privilege of attending him in England : "How is it, Mr. Fitch, that you drive so *slowly* through the streets to the royal train ? Surely there is danger in that ?"

I assured him that there would never be danger—in England. Abroad, kings usually drive fast, and often do not announce their route. Here, we do our combing thoroughly beforehand. Among the crowds that line the way there is left no one who might constitute a danger to the visitor.

The train itself is searched from end to end. It is more a matter of form than anything else, since the railway officials are competent to keep it clear of undesirables ; but the search is no less rigorous for all that. A pilot engine travels ahead when at last the train leaves the station.

Round our big London railway termini, as everyone knows, exists a veritable rabbit-warren of tenement houses. It might be thought that here, if anywhere, an anarchist assassin could rent a room and, leaning from his window, hurl down a bomb on the royal train as it passed beneath.

The Special Branch has an intimate knowledge of those tenement houses. It knows, among other things, that their dwellers are, in the main, wondrously loyal to His Majesty King George V. It knows that they would tear any foreigner limb from limb who attempted the life of one of the King's royal visitors. But it does not depend entirely on this knowledge.

In key positions, not only around the terminus stations in London but in our ports, our inland cities, and all over the world, are Special Branch men, serving perhaps as barmen in public-houses, stewards on ships, secretaries in working-men's clubs—in fact, in all those places where people *talk*. Our men listen. Day and night their reports come in to Scotland Yard. Long before any nihilist plot can be successfully hatched, the plotters find themselves confronted by quiet men in soft civilian suits, and learn that they must cease from disturbing the King's peace, or suffer the rigours of the law.

Of all the millions of "lodgers" who drift in and out of the tenements, who might rent rooms commanding the way by which a Royalty will pass, or who might lure others—perhaps for gold or for a "shot" of cocaine—to do the thing they dread to do themselves, not one may pass of whom the Special Branch has reason to think, "That man is dangerous." They are free to go elsewhere, but they are given no chance of causing trouble or leading up to an assassination.

Whenever the Royalty one is guarding passes out from the gates of an English palace where he or she is staying, the detective guardian on duty follows, as silently and inconspicuously as the walker's own shadow, out of sight perhaps, often without the sovereign even knowing that he or she is being followed.

Should he take a car, a taxi follows it. If he enters a house or a shop, the "shadow" is within call. At a garden-party or at the theatre, there is waiting somewhere very near at hand a rather retiring man in appropriate dress, indistinguishable from the other theatre-goers or guests.

But everyone who approaches or even looks at the

royal figure is scanned by a keen pair of eyes backed by a trained memory. No hand could be raised but the "shadow" would be there to prevent it, or to interpose his person if need arose.

The task is sometimes fatiguing, sometimes taxing to the ingenuity, sometimes very exciting, but it is always engrossing.

Nor is that all. The slightest hint of officiousness, of lack of perfect tact, or of insufficient social aplomb, and the detective "shadow" would speedily be superseded. Sometimes, as I shall show, embarrassments arise which it is not easy to overcome. Foreign Royalties, in particular, occasionally do and say things which give the guardian of the royal person furiously to think.

When the Shah of Persia visited King Edward early in the present century, for instance, he went to a performance at the old Alhambra music-hall. I was a young detective then, and I had the story from an older colleague who was on duty at the time, in attendance on the Shah.

One of the chorus-girls on the stage seemed particularly to attract the "King of Kings", as he was officially styled. He watched this handsome lass for some time, and then turned to my colleague and said : "You see that girl—the one with the ripe pomegranates for lips, and like unto the new moon for grace ? Go and tell her that I will take her back to Persia with me."

The detective was a quick-witted man, and he explained without hesitation that his orders were on no account to desert the royal person.

The Shah nodded, and then turned to his Grand Vizier with the same command. The latter official, thinking it all most proper, trotted off to the stage door.

He was away some minutes, and returned looking frightened and angry ; indeed, he was almost tearful.

"Well, man—what did she say?" asked the Shah, caressing his moustaches.

"Majesty—she beat me grievously on both cheeks, and drove me from the room with vile words !"

For once, the traditional gravity and urbanity which Special Branch detectives are expected to show to foreign Royalties seems to have been seriously endangered.

It is an interesting sequel to the story that an ex-chorus-girl from the Alhambra did actually return to Persia later in His Eastern Majesty's train. Whether it was the same one or no, I cannot say.

When attached to the service of a visiting Royalty, I found that my duties were by no means encompassed by the command merely to see to the visitor's safety. In a modest way, it was necessary at times to be guide, philosopher, and friend.

Perhaps the new-comer wished to know something of the country through which his car or train was passing. Or perhaps he wished to see the sights of London. Or, again, he might ask my opinion of the various plays then being presented. A proposed car trip into the country might be submitted to me for approval as to its safety.

Sometimes I was able to make suggestions which, the royal guests later assured me, added to their enjoyment of England. Often, I could give details about trains, about shops, or about some aspect of life or industry in Britain. It was my task to make the visits of the King's guests pleasant, as well as safe.

If a visiting king likes a country he visits, then it is probable that his political relations with that country

will be pleasant ones in the future. The responsibilities of those who guard his person are therefore considerable.

And my experience has been that visiting Royalties have not always looked forward with enjoyment to being guarded by our detectives. The manners of police in some other parts of the world are not quite the same as those we are required to show in Britain. In some places, detectives in particular are somewhat dreaded. This, perhaps, explains why it happened that, the first time I was detailed to look after the safety of the Tsar of Russia in England, I met with a chilly reception at first.

I had applied in the usual way to one of the Russian royal visitor's secretaries, to explain that I was temporarily attached to the suite, and to ask that I might be kept informed of the Emperor's movements. I was assured, quite courteously but finally, that the Emperor felt perfectly safe in England, and that he had no wish for any special precautions to be taken on his behalf.

In other words, my services were not wanted. Yet I was responsible to my Department, and I could not report to them that the task was beyond me.

I took other steps to discover the Tsar's plans, and what precautions were deemed necessary I still took. Actually, since the Tsar's life had several times been threatened in Russia, this was one of the most worrying periods of my career, for we did not want anything untoward to happen here.

When His Imperial Majesty took incognito strolls, as once or twice during that visit he did, in London, I followed him at a discreet distance, having the double task of never losing sight of him and never permitting him to catch sight of me. In this way I still contrived to

keep guard over his person without his knowledge of my existence. At least, so I imagined.

Unluckily, I turned a corner rather suddenly on one of these walks, and found the Tsar standing chatting to one of his suite immediately in front of me, so close that I was obliged to walk quietly past. My intention was to get a little way in front, and then wait for him to pass me again. But as I passed him, he called quietly to me.

"I think I have seen you before," he said. "Would you mind telling me if you are attached to the Palace staff?"

Rather uneasily—the detective detected !—I confessed that I had been put in charge of His Imperial Majesty's safety during his stay, and that, since I understood that he did not wish to be annoyed by close surveillance, I had tried to keep unobserved.

"Well, I think you've done it amazingly well," he said, with his infectious laugh. "I've been quite intrigued, moving so freely about the London streets, and wondering why your country was so free of troublesome elements. I really thought that some of the anarchist gentry we have at home in Russia were missing the chance of a lifetime !"

I explained very briefly some of the precautions taken by Scotland Yard. In the first place, as I showed, it would be extraordinarily difficult for ill-intentioned persons to slip through the tight net drawn about our ports to exclude undesirable immigrants. Then, even if such an individual found foothold in England, it would be impossible for him to approach the person of a royal visitor without coming in contact with one or other of the protective lines of defence drawn around such a celebrity.

"I think your detectives must be invisible," smiled the Tsar at length. "I had no idea you had been shadowing me, yet you seem from what you say to have been within call all the time. I merely saw your face in the Palace once, just after I arrived, and remembered it just now. The reason we did not seek your service before was because in some countries where I have travelled the police are ostentatious and rather tactless. I certainly cannot complain of that here."

After this incident, the Tsar permitted me to have full details of his movements, and often spoke to me in a most informal and friendly manner. I shall have some stories to tell of him in a later chapter.

So far, I have described chiefly the work done by Special Branch detectives when placed in charge of the safety of one of the King's visitors. But a duty much more prized was that which often came to us of attending on the occasions when His Majesty himself, or some member of his own Household, needed extra police care. Perhaps when the King went to the races or the threatre, possibly at a time when agitators such as the suffragettes were inclined to be troublesome; or when a member of the Royal Family went to Sandringham, Balmoral, or Cowes, one of us would be detailed to accompany him.

It was very often my good fortune to be selected for such tasks, both during the reign of the late King Edward and during the present reign. I have been over much of England, and also abroad, in royal suites in this way, and—to me at least—those times have been much more interesting than any I have spent as guardian to foreign Royalties.

I therefore propose to tell first in this book something of the various occasions when it has been my duty

to act as guardian to His Majesty the King and his family, though before I have finished I shall recount stories of half the crowned heads of Europe, and perhaps of some of the rulers of the mystic East as well.

And I would like to say now, before I start, that if at any time in my tale it seems that I am guilty of unintentional *lèse-majesté*, the fault will be in my telling of the incidents in question, not in the actions of the royal participants. I am a detective, not a writer, and I must seek indulgence on that ground.

I have known many kings and rulers, and have found most of them human, sympathetic, friendly, and kind. Not one of them but could enjoy a good joke, or make one ; not one that I can remember who did not do everything he or she could do to make my task an easy and pleasant one. Sometimes, in the case of foreign visitors unused to our language and customs, little slips were made which seem amusing when told ; when they happened, the first persons to smile at them were the royal offenders themselves. They were, if I may use the term without disrespect, "good sportsmen", and the best-loved and greatest of them all is the king to whom I propose to devote my next few chapters—His Majesty King George V of England.

CHAPTER II

His Majesty the King—Our ruler at work—Head of the British family—With the King before the war, and after—War work—Keen interest in America—A presentation of V.C.s—The U.S. officer and the royal autographs—The King and the Unknown Warrior

"HEAD of the greatest business organization the world has ever known!" That is how a famous American essayist has described George V of England. It is not a bad definition.

Few people, save those in personal contact with him, realize just how hard His Majesty works for his Empire. The King's task is never done. He keeps regular hours, most of which are allotted specifically to conducting the nation's business. But every hour of his leisure, every minute of his waking time, is spent thinking, planning, acting for the welfare of the teeming millions, to many of whom he is no more than a name and an idea. Dinners, Courts, balls, talks to famous men or informal chats to the humblest members of his people—it may look like recreation, but it is work behind which lies endless careful thought.

You and I divide our lives into two periods—that in which we are the servant of our job and that in which we are our own master. His Majesty, ruler of the world's greatest Empire, is the servant of his people always.

Of medium height, sturdily built, the King looks every inch a sailor. The wheel of the *Britannia* is his most appropriate setting, keen blue eyes watching the waves ahead, hands as steady on the wheel as they have been on the helm of Britain's fortunes for so many years. It has been said that King Edward won a greater deference from England, but King George has earned the deeper affection.

While in attendance on His Late Majesty King Edward VII, I often saw our present King and Queen, but never had the privilege of acting as detective guard to them till after their accession to the throne, though I was on duty, among others, when the great and sad procession followed King Edward's coffin through the black-draped London streets. King George walked in that procession, at the head of eight kings, and the sixteen-year-old Prince Edward of Wales, in naval cadet's uniform, was at his father's side.

The occasion which I always recall as the first time I came into personal contact with His Majesty was in May 1911, when he and the Queen attended a wonderful Festival of Empire at the Crystal Palace. Sir Henry Wood was there, and Sir Alexander MacKenzie. Madame Clara Butt sang some patriotic songs, and a choir of about five thousand trained voices was supported, at times, by the singing of the vast mass of onlookers.

As the royal party was entering the Crystal Palace, a small boy appeared from nowhere, as small boys sometimes so remarkably do, and hesitated just in front of the King and Queen. It was very much an unrehearsed incident ; and we saw at once that the little chap was on the very verge of tears. He looked white and miserable.

"Please, sir, can you tell me where Dr. Harriss is, sir ?" he asked suddenly, turning direct to the King.

His Majesty, whose face was not, of course, so universally known then as now, realized immediately that the child had not recognized him. He bent down and asked the boy a question, and sensing the kindness of the tone the lad suddenly poured out the whole story. He was one of the singers in the forthcoming festival, I believe ; at any rate, he had been sent with a message to Dr. Charles Harriss, who was directing the production, had lost his way in the vast interior of that glass palace, and was now very frightened.

The King patted him on the shoulder. "You're all right now," His Majesty said quietly. "Will you take him to Dr. Harriss, please," he commanded, turning to me.

Something in the pleasant voice made the child realize that this was the King. I shall never forget the tremulous, adoring smile that lighted up the small face—it was suddenly like the face of a young saint, with the sun golden upon it.

He was quite silent, struggling with his own thoughts, as we walked away. After I had delivered him safely over to Dr. Harriss, and in a rapt voice he had given his message, he turned to me.

"Isn't the King *kind* !" he whispered.

I think he summed up a great reign in those four words.

England has often stood, like that boy, in fear and perplexity since then—at the parting of the ways. In the suffragette troubles, in those unnatural and terrible days at the beginning of August 1914, many times in the darkest hours of the war, during the Irish revolt, in the General Strike, and through the age-long months of

the financial depression through which we recently passed, our King has guided us back to safety, security, peace, and honour.

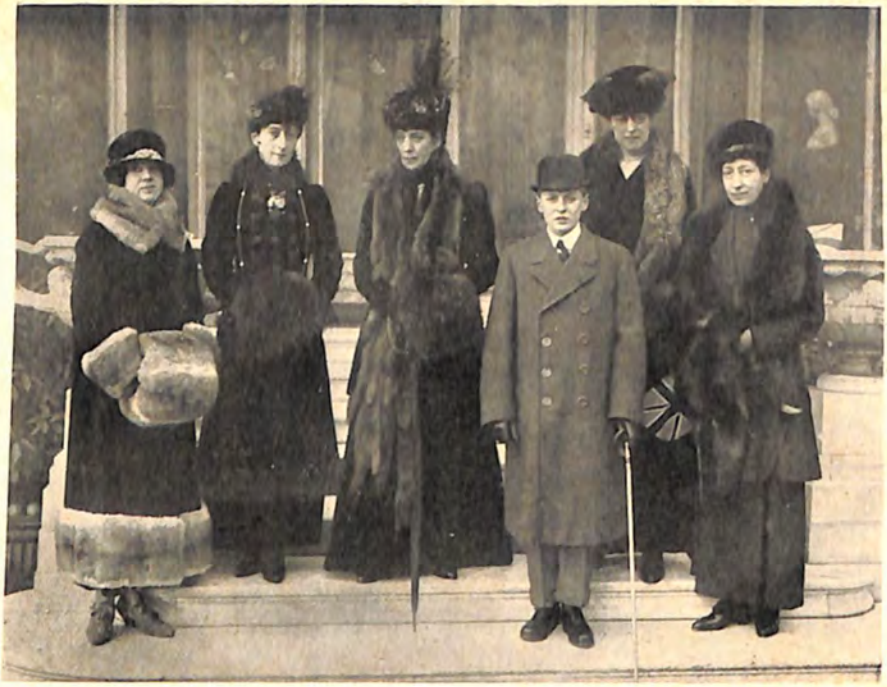
His kindness has become a byword throughout the world. He permits no deviation from the set rule that he be kept informed, at all hours of the day and night, of the daily lives of his people. There is a story that once, at the time of a great mine disaster, the news was kept from His Majesty for some hours, so that his sleep might not be disturbed, and he might take his breakfast in peace. When he was informed, so the story runs, he spoke with much severity to those responsible for the delay, and instantly made personal inquiries into the disaster.

The royal telegrams of sympathy and congratulation so frequently dispatched from Buckingham Palace are no mere formalities arranged by the King's secretaries. Each one is planned and dictated by the King himself, and is a personal expression of his own feeling.

Every morning, when he rises at 7.30, a big bundle of the day's newspapers is taken to his room. His first task is to examine them all, to see just what his subjects are thinking and talking about that day. He does not confine himself to papers of any one shade of political opinion, and he studies earnestly every point of view that is presented by the Press. More than once in his reign, some unknown correspondent's "Letter to the Editor" has been marked down, in Buckingham Palace, so that inquiry may be made into complaint or praise that was certainly never expected to reach the royal eyes.

Visitors to the Palace are constantly surprised by the King's wide knowledge of all sides of current affairs—not political matters only, but football, aviation, the administration of daily justice, slumland's needs and

AT THE FUNERAL OF KING EDWARD VII. KING GEORGE, THE PRINCE OF WALES, THE DUKE OF YORK, THE KAISER, THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT, THE KING OF SPAIN, AND THE KING OF BULGARIA ARE SEEN WALKING BEHIND THE COFFIN



ABOVE (*left to right*) : PRINCESS ALEXANDRA, QUEEN MAUD OF NORWAY, QUEEN ALEXANDRA, PRINCE OLAV OF NORWAY, PRINCESS VICTORIA, AND THE PRINCESS ROYAL IN 1919

BELOW : H.M. THE KING AND QUEEN FOLLOWED BY T.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES AND PRINCESS MARY AT THE 1911 CRYSTAL PALACE FESTIVAL OF EMPIRE (MR. FITCH IN BACKGROUND)

remedies, the conditions of troops in camp, typing contests—finding him, in fact, extraordinarily well informed about the whole panorama of everyday life.

His Majesty takes breakfast at 8.30, and the Queen usually brews China tea for the meal while sitting at the table. Fare is simple ; though the Palace chefs are noted the world over, they exercise the refinements of their mystic art chiefly for the royal visitors, for the King prefers, in the main, homely dishes.

At 9 a.m. the royal working day officially begins—half an hour before the majority of City workers are in their offices ! The King studies the dispatches and papers brought from various Government departments, and makes notes for his secretaries' guidance in dealing with them.

After that, visitors are received. They vary from, perhaps, the Prime Minister down to country clergy, and from viceroys to unknown commissioners holding sway over primitive forests under the distant tropical sun. Every year His Majesty receives in audience four or five hundred people. And it is said that he never forgets a face.

No one will ever realize fully just how many great happenings have their beginnings in quiet talks in the King's study. I know one forest commissioner holding sway over an almost uncharted section of Africa, who, after a leave at home, stopped what might have been a considerable native war by saying to an army of naked black tribesmen : "I saw our lord the King before I returned to you this time, and he himself gave me this message for you. . . ." And the words that followed wisely and fairly settled an ancient local grievance.

When the commissioner's words died away, there was first sinister silence in the hot forest clearing, and then a sudden rumble of shouted applause ran like a thunderclap through the negro ranks. Their King had judged ; so let it be.

George V is the personal head of each section of his mighty Empire. He is *Fidi Defensor* in more than name ; many a Church problem is referred to him for comment. He is interested in the running of his police forces, his armies, his great navy, the foreign affairs of his Government, the industries that make our country prosperous, the housing of his people. A shrewd suggestion here, a sharp comment there, always the steady hand guiding. The more I have learned of the King, the more positive I have become that kingship is the ideal form of rule for England. A President, no matter how clever, could never gain the great experience and wonderful tact and gentleness that mark out our present ruler. A dictator could never gain the love and appreciation that the King has found. We in England are very lucky in our leader.

When the audiences are done, the King lunches, but this is only a nominal rest from the working routine. Constantly guests are honoured by invitations to lunch with the King, and, indirectly or directly, the talk at these lunches is usually directed towards the search for that which His Majesty has made the Golden Grail of his knightly pilgrimage—the welfare of his people.

From luncheon to tea is a period free of official business, but after tea the evening dispatches begin to arrive, and State affairs engage the King's time thereafter. Every day he signs upwards of a hundred State papers, letters, and commissions. He has long discussions

with his Ministers, and gives them the benefit of his lifelong experience and keen judgment.

Dinner is served at eight o'clock, and the evenings—or such of them as are free from Court functions or other work—are spent by His Majesty reading, listening-in, or in quiet conversation. He is somewhat of a wireless enthusiast, though his patronage of the theatre and the cinema has not declined in the least as a result.

The King usually retires at eleven o'clock, unless detained by some very important function or by grave State affairs.

This is a brief account of the King's day when he is at the Palace. But, of course, he frequently travels about England in pursuit of his public duties, and on many such occasions it has been my pleasant duty to accompany him as Special Branch detective guard.

One of the most delightful of such occasions was, I think, when the King laid the foundation-stone of Australia House on a glorious July day in 1913.

The three royal carriages left Buckingham Palace about half past eleven, and reached the site of what is now Australia House close upon noon. The then High Commissioner for Australia, Sir George Reid, received them there, and his daughter, a very beautiful girl, presented a bouquet to the Queen.

A famous prima donna—I believe it was Ada Crossley—sang the National Anthem, and then, after one or two presentations, the real business of the day was begun. A bed of mortar had been spread on the bed-stone, and the King took a trowel, lifted some mortar from a board held by one of the officials, and finished the laying of the mortar, smoothing it off carefully. The huge foundation-stone was gently lowered into position,

and the King took a mallet and tapped it firmly into place. Finally, he ran over it with a spirit-level, to make sure that it was satisfactorily set in its bed.

There followed a fine flourish of trumpets, and His Majesty declared in a clear voice that the stone was now well and truly laid.

In the moment of dead silence that succeeded the words, and before the inevitable burst of clapping came, an old workman who had taken some minor part in lowering the stone remarked to a friend : "That's the foundation-stone of England a-layin' of the foundation-stone of Australia !"

Unfortunately for him, he miscalculated his time in speaking, and his hoarse whisper carried quite clearly to where we stood. Everyone smiled involuntarily, including the royal mason himself, but the unhappy workman went scarlet, and, as the clapping broke out like a storm from all around, he rapidly disappeared.

Before the stone was laid, an interesting little ceremony took place. A number of coins and documents were placed in a bronze box, and this box was locked by the King and set in the very heart of the great stone. In future ages, when Australia House is being pulled down, perhaps to make way for some vast central-London air-field, our descendants of hundreds of years hence will discover the box, read the papers and handle the coins, and try to picture that bygone scene when the historic George V of England stood among his faithful subjects and enclosed these relics of his reign to preserve them for the eyes of some later world.

One thing which the history-books of those dim future times will tell of our King is that he invariably kept himself abreast of the times. He took an interest in

the cinema long before the war ; radio, as I have said, has always appealed to him ; and he has watched the development of flying with keen appreciation. As long ago as 1913, a British airman was commanded to give a demonstration of "looping the loop" before the Royal Family at Windsor. I remember watching the machine, up there over the stately castle that is like a casket of English history, and wondering what *it* thought of the Englishman who thus defied the very heavens themselves.

The King watched the flying with close attention, as did the Prince of Wales. I did not dream then that the Prince's interest would grow from that beginning to a point where he would own and pilot his own machines, or that, a brief year or so after the exhibition, a war would break out in which the new flying-machines would menace the very existence of London, and play a great part in threatening King George's Empire.

I did not accompany His Majesty to India, to the Delhi Durbar, and I have always been rather regretful of the fact. It must have been a very wonderful time. On his return, I was detailed at various times to detective duty in connection with him, but my next memory of his working life is of an incident during the war declared against the Kaiser, who had often been the King's guest, and whom I had been detailed to serve during his English visits, as I shall tell in a later chapter.

The King worked harder, perhaps, during the war than at any other time in his reign. He was everywhere, encouraging with his presence, wise in his advice, calm and confident in his demeanour.

I can never think of the war, in which I was chiefly employed in the task of spy-detection, without instantly recalling a vivid scene in which His Majesty figured. It

took place in Hyde Park, on a Saturday afternoon in June 1917. There had been reverses at the Front, Russia had collapsed, submarines were making Britain tighten her belt, grave mutinies were occurring in the French army, and the Allied cause was in about as bad a state as it could well be. One hint of uneasiness on the part of the King, and panic would have run fleet-foot through England. Yet I have never seen him more splendidly cool and cheerful than he was on that June day, before the eyes of a fearful and watching world, as he stood in the midst of a formidable assembly of his troops in London.

No brilliant uniforms were seen, such as usually greet a royal presence. Sober, war-faded khaki spread around us, the only touches of colour being the Field Marshal's straps on the shoulders of His Majesty's uniform. Crowds of quiet civilians looked on at the ceremony—only most of them were old men, wan women, or limping figures who had served their turn and come back scarred and broken from the inferno.

The King had come to present Victoria Crosses to certain of his most valiant soldiers. There was no ostentation and but little ceremony : the occasion was too sad for that. From my place near the Royal Stand, I watched the pathetic pageant pass.

The stories of those who were decorated by their King that day would fill many books. Major Murray, a tall and bronzed Australian, who had held a thin line of men together under a whole night of hellish attack, had led charge after charge, and had brought back in his arms, under scorching rifle and machine-gun fire, several wounded men.

Captain Allen of the R.A.M.C. had seen the Germans begin steadily shelling a party of gunners who were unloading high-explosives for one of our batteries. The first German shell fell in the midst of a dump of our own ammunition and exploded it. . . . Captain Allen was the first man to run to that ghastly Gehenna, where explosions were occurring with sickening regularity, and drag and carry away those who were not dead. He was hit four times during an hour's work, but that he did not think fit to mention till the human mess about the shell dump was adequately cleared up. . . .

Lieutenant Palmer was just a sergeant when he found that all his officers had been killed by machine-gun fire. He walked out to the German wire, cut it while machine-guns were fired point-blank at him, rushed the enemy trench and put the worst gun out of action, was blown off his feet by a bomb in a counter-attack but still shouted encouragement to his men as he lay in the bottom of the trench.

Lieutenant Bradford, finding his men flinching under terrible fire, strolled up and down on the parapet of the trench and jollied them till their nerves were quieted again.

Captain Archie White of the Yorkshires kept heart in his men for four sleepless days and nights, under intense fire and constant hand-to-hand attacks, and joked with them all the time.

Private Cunningham, sole survivor of a bombing unit which had been told to clear a certain section of enemy trench, took the bombs from his dead companions and went on and did the job himself.

Private Hughes, big and bony Irishman of the Connaught Rangers, was badly wounded, but, after

tying up his hurts, dashed across No Man's Land alone and silenced a machine-gun, bringing back its crew of four as prisoners, together with another wound that nearly cost him his life. They say that he was singing as he marched his captives back.

To each of these, the royal figure in Field Marshal's uniform said something—there is not much a man can say at such a time to others who have done such things for him !

And after these came a sadly proud procession to receive the inconspicuous little bronze crosses on behalf of dead heroes : the father of Lieutenant Cates, the mother of Sergeant Erskine, the widow of Sergeant Mottershead, the father of Private Fynn.

When it was all over, the King turned to one of his staff officers. For a moment or two he was too affected to speak.

"What men !" he exclaimed at last, in a low voice. "What deeds ! How can I help being proud of my people !"

His voice was shaken with emotion. For the rest of that day his eyes were shadowed with thoughts of the blind heroism going on out there in France and elsewhere, for King and country and the helpless following of inexpressible ideals.

Let me turn to a happier memory of the King in the war years. Their Majesties were making one of their frequent tours of inspection of a great munition factory, and I had been appointed detective guard for the occasion. It was a time when the very greatest precautions had to be taken for the safety of the royal party. The tour was taking place through rooms where tons and tons of high explosive were stored, and I had to be

even more than usually careful that all complications were avoided, and no risks run.

For this reason, I looked rather hard at a young American Army officer who came up to me just before the visit and asked for a word with me. He belonged to a unit of the United States forces then stationed near Leicester. He explained his business.

"Now, I've got a special request to put to you, Mr. Fitch," he began, "and I want you to grant it if you can. My folks went away over to the States four generations back, and each generation swore to come over to see how the Old Country was gettin' along. They never did.

"Now I'm over here by the good fortune of war, and I guess I want to see the King close to. It's like this, you see. I shan't have another chance, once this war's over, because my job just ties me to America. Can it be done?"

I made some inquiries, and thoroughly satisfied myself that no harm could possibly come from granting the request that this young American put forward with such earnestness. Of course, he had also to get the permission of the factory officials, but he was a hustler, and he did that as well, though it must have been quite difficult.

On the day of the tour, as I passed behind the royal party through the various rooms of the great factory, I eventually saw my American acquaintance, looking rather red but very determined, ahead of us, with a group of officials. These latter were presented to the King, and then the American officer suddenly stepped forward, being presented by one of the factory proprietors.

"Your Majesty," he said, saluting smartly—indeed, he looked extraordinarily spick-and-span in his uniform —"I've a privilege to ask which I hope you won't think rude, for you can see I don't mean it that way. No one has a deeper respect for Your Majesty than I have. But back in the States I know hundreds of folks who reckon themselves cousins to the English—their parents and grandparents came from hereaway. If I could carry back Your Majesty's own autograph, I guess it would warm the very hearts of a lot of people who may never have the luck I've had of seeing you in person. They *would* like it, sir !"

The distinguished figure in Field Marshal's uniform was obviously moved by the deep sincerity of the American's tones. As a matter of fact, the King has always been very interested in the United States and its people.

"It is because you are cousins that you have come over here to help us in our hour of need," he replied gravely. "You shall have my autograph. But I fear I have no pen, and there is no table at which to write. I shall have it sent to you."

The American captain went rather white, but he stuck bravely to his guns.

"Here is a pen, Your Majesty," he said, offering a fountain-pen and paper from his tunic pocket. "And if you would use my back as a table, sir . . ."

The King could not resist a smile at this ingenuity. "Turn round and bend down," he commanded, taking the pen and paper.

The officer obeyed, the straps of his tunic creaking, and His Majesty wrote—"George R.I."—finishing up with the famous little scrawl under the name, rather like

the sign of infinity in mathematics. The "table" remained as firm as a rock.

As the officer straightened himself, he saw one of the factory people carrying in a chair and a small desk. They were set down, and the Queen quietly added her name to the autograph of the King.

The captain hardly knew how to thank her—she had signed for the desk while His Majesty was writing his signature. It was a gesture very typical of the Queen as I know her—she wished to give the visitor from the States even more than he had asked for.

As they turned away, I heard His Majesty say with a smile to Queen Mary : "I've never seen a broader back. What a back on which to lay the accolade of knighthood !"

I accompanied His Majesty to various parts of Great Britain during the war. He inspected troops, aircraft depots, naval detachments, women's armies, factories, and workshops, leaving always behind him renewed hope, revived faith, and fresh courage. Have you ever seen the sunlight come chasing across a shadowy field on an April day ? That was how the King affected an area he visited during those dark years. I, in his train, never ceased to be amazed, even after I had come to look for the effect. "The divinity that doth hedge a King" was never used to surer purpose.

At last the war was over, but it left its mark on the man who rules us. Four years of such responsibility would age anyone. Nor was the weight of the royal task greatly lightened after the Armistice was signed. To make war is a straightforward work, but to make and keep peace, to bind the wounds of a sorely hurt Empire and set it on the path to happiness and prosperity again,

was a task before which a younger man than King George might well have quailed. How he has succeeded, history now records.

The most striking memory of His Majesty which I retain from post-war years is a mental picture of him as he walked behind the gun-carriage that bore the body of the Unknown Warrior to its last resting-place. That was, perhaps, not an occasion when a detective guard was necessary, for the crowds of war mourners who lined the streets were too massed to allow the entry of any ill-intentioned foreigner. But the formality had to be carried out just the same, and in consequence I obtained a privileged view of the whole proceedings.

Ranks of soldiers, heads bowed over reversed rifles, lined the way, and between them the gun-carriage, flag-draped and followed on foot by His Majesty and the Princes, was drawn by six magnificent black horses. Behind came the most famous men in the Empire—soldiers, sailors, clergy, statesmen, and administrators.

When he had unveiled the Cenotaph—the empty tomb that signified to the King the rows and endless rows of little white crosses planted over British dead the wide earth over—His Majesty stood for some seconds quite still. He seemed unable to move or speak as he thought of the smiling millions who had lightly laid down youth and life at his command. At length he moved on, leading the great procession to Westminster Abbey, where the body of the unknown British soldier was lowered into its simple tomb.

The Abbey service—the Empire's farewell to millions of her sons—was intensely moving. Soldiers, who had forced a laugh at the horrors of Flanders and the dysentery of Salonika, cried as the service solemnly

proceeded and the thunder of the anthems rolled back from the hoary Abbey walls to where the dead kings lay listening.

There was no pomp and pageantry about this addenda to the most recent volume of war's glorious history. The uniforms were sober khaki and blue ; what colour there was, the paler blue of the wounded chiefly provided. Only the Union Jack flamed scarlet over the place where the unknown body rested at long last.

When the King spoke afterwards, his voice was deeper and more shaken than I have ever heard it before or since.

He paid tribute to the millions who had been alive and happy four short years before, and who had now passed, almost by regiments, into the shadows of the unknown. He spoke of their comradeship, their loyalty, their great courage—things that will remain immortal long after the dusty professors have finally settled Mons and Somme and Gallipoli firmly between the pages of the children's history-books.

Finally, the King said that he trusted and prayed that there would never be another Unknown Warrior in Westminster, and that no future sovereign would repeat his grievous task. I wonder ?

No one knows who first conceived the beautiful thought of bringing the body of an absolutely unknown Tommy to lie, representative of all our dead, among the Kings and great ones of our land, in the cloistered quiet of the Abbey, true symbol of England's heart. But I have heard it stated more than once that the King himself, while looking at a great assembly of crosses, poppy-strewn, on one of his wartime visits to France, said suddenly : "A body should be brought from some such

place as this to lie for ever among the heroes at the Abbey", and that the plan was perfected from that inspiration. I did not accompany His Majesty on his war visits across the Channel, so I cannot say how true this report may be, but the idea is one that might well have originated from the man who, of all England, seems always to think of the thing that is perfectly appropriate and most representative of his people's wishes.

CHAPTER III

The King at play—A Coronation performance—A "Palace" memory—"Good night, George !"—I am "arrested" at a garden-party—The man with the skull and crossbones—At the Derby with the King—"One loser enough for the family" —The fate of the "rubbernecks"—Aboard the *Britannia*.

IT is a capacity given to few great men to be able to play as thoroughly as they can work. King George V possesses this gift, and, because of it, he has been able to endure the strain of a long reign of almost super-human responsibility, and is now, at seventy years of age, the personification of ripe vigour and activity.

Many times during my career it has been my pleasant duty to accompany His Majesty to the amusements which lighten his leisure hours. The first of those occasions was in June 1911, exactly one week after his magnificent Coronation ceremony at the Abbey. I have many vivid memories of the British stage both before and since the war, but even in its heyday in the first decade of the century I cannot recall anything so enthralling as the Coronation Gala Performance at His Majesty's Theatre, and I do not believe we shall see its match in the King's reign.

It was made possible by the genius of Sir Herbert Tree ; no one else, I believe, could have confined that tempest of temperament under one roof without losing

the roof! I will tell you a few of the names that appeared on the programme.

Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, when one of the most fashionable audiences ever seen anywhere had finally settled into its seats, opened the performance by speaking a prologue, specially written for the occasion by Sir Owen Seaman, Editor of *Punch*. It was a long prologue, and the King and his lovely young Queen listened enraptured from the Royal Box.

Then came the Letter scene from the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, in which appeared Dame Madge Kendal, Dame Ellen Terry, Mrs. Calvert, and Rutland Barrington. After that, there followed a scene from *David Garrick*, then the Forum scene from *Julius Caesar*, then *The Critic* by Sheridan, then Ben Jonson's *Vision of Delight*.

Among the players present were Charles Wyndham, Tree himself, Sir Henry Ainley, George Arliss, Franklin Dyall, Leon M. Lion, Henry Lytton, Charles Macdona, Hilda Moore, Owen Nares, Sir Nigel Playfair, Godfrey Tearle, Sir Arthur Bourchier, Sir Charles Hawtrey, George Grossmith, Robert Loraine, Sir Gerald du Maurier, Gertie Millar, Lily Elsie, Violet Vanbrugh, Marie Tempest, Ketty Loftus, Mrs. Pat Campbell, Lily Langtry, Lena Ashwell, Marion Terry, Lillah McCarthy, Lilian Braithwaite, Marie Lohr, Haidee Wright, Auriol Lee, and Athene Seyler. And I have forgotten as many famous names as I have remembered.

The King, and everyone else present, I believe, was entranced throughout the performance. Despite its ambitious nature, it ran without a hitch and perfectly to time. I shall always remember how His Majesty sat, elbow on knee and chin on hand, watching the passing pageant of the stage, and how he and the Queen,

H.M. KING GEORGE V WHEN PRINCE OF WALES, IN A SCOTTISH SHOOTING-BOX

H.M. THE KING AT THE WHEEL OF "BRITANNIA"

charmed for a time into forgetfulness of their high office, were sometimes almost near to tears and sometimes rocked with infectious laughter as the scenes unrolled before them.

At the end, Dame Clara Butt sang the National Anthem, and then the packed audience could no longer be held in check. Deafening clapping gave way to thunder on thunder of cheers that seemed to shake the very walls, and then the whole house was singing : "Thy choicest gifts in store On him be pleased to pour . . ." And even then, only a little way ahead, lay the gaunt shadows of war.

Almost exactly a year later I was on duty on the occasion of His Majesty's visit to another theatre—the Palace. This time, it was to see a variety performance, and one as wonderful in its own way as the gala presentation of the Coronation week. A Phil May fantasy was danced by the Palace Girls, Chirgwin the White-eyed Kaffir kept us in almost painful peals of merriment, little Fanny Fields made her clogs click out the very dance-time of happiness, Cinquevalli the human billiard-table performed veritable magic, Harry Tate gave us his "Motoring" sketch, at which the King laughed till tears ran down his cheeks ; Vesta Tilley sang "The Piccadilly Johnny" ; Little Titch, Alfred Lester, Clarice Mayne and J. W. Tate carried us from grave to gay and back again ; George Robey reduced us almost to hysteria with his eyebrows ; Devant displayed wizardry that made the Queen clap for an encore ; Wilkie Bard took us back to laughter ; Cissie Loftus amazed us with impersonations ; Harry Lauder sang us "Roamin' in the Gloamin' ", and the incomparable Anna Pavlova danced her swan-dance.

Where could you find such a list today ?

The applause from the Royal Box was generous and quick. Artiste after artiste bowed to Their Majesties as they clapped in spontaneous appreciation. It was a truly wonderful performance, the first of many in which the King's players have striven with the very best that is in them to lighten the royal way with golden hours of laughter and forgetfulness.

After the show was over, Anna Pavlova was sent for, and went to the Royal Box. She stayed chatting to Their Majesties for some minutes, and I have heard it said that the Queen in particular took a great interest, after this meeting, in the meteoric career of the young Russian ballerina. I think I am right in saying, too, that this was the last occasion on which Anna Pavlova appeared as an ordinary variety turn. Very soon afterwards she was filling the Royal Opera House by the magic of her name, and the King and Queen went there to see her.

I have another memory—an amusing one—of the evening of that performance at the Palace. Harry Lauder was also sent for, to be presented to the King and Queen, and they asked him a number of questions about his recent American tour, in which he had more or less swept the United States off its feet. Lauder was conducted to the Royal Box by Mr. George Ashton, the concert agent who in those days arranged command performances, and, after the little comedian had emerged from Their Majesties' presence, Mr. Ashton buttonholed him, outside the Royal Box, and spoke to him for a minute. Finally, they shook hands.

"Good nicht, George, and guid luck!" said Harry cheerily. At the same moment the King came out into the corridor.

I saw Harry Lauder's broad face suddenly stain

scarlet, and he stood tense against the wall. He was obviously wondering what His Majesty would say to what would have seemed, had he not noticed the retreating Mr. George Ashton, a gross affront. But the King instantly realized exactly what had happened, and put everything right in his own inimitable way.

"Guid nicht, Harry, and the same tae you!" he said in broadest Scots, so swiftly that it seemed a direct answer to the comedian's own voice. And then the royal pair passed down the corridor, the King chuckling delightedly over his "wee jokie".

It was not long after this command performance that I had an amusing experience on my own, while acting as attendant to His Majesty at one of the entertainments he likes best—a friend's garden-party. The King and Queen had gone to a party given by the Hon. Alfred de Rothschild. The day was glorious; a perfect dome of cloudless blue sky spread maternally over shaven lawns and shady trees, where the many distinguished guests strolled up and down, chatting and laughing, and a Guards band played delightfully.

In the course of a preliminary inspection of the grounds, I wandered some distance away from the centre of the proceedings, and suddenly came face to face with a most suspicious-looking gardener. He straightened up and asked, very politely but quite firmly, if he could be of any assistance to me.

"I'm a detective looking after His Majesty's safety," I said.

For some reason that seemed to increase his doubts of my authenticity.

"I'll just show you the way back to where they are, sir," he said.

We walked together to a place from which we could see the gay frocks and sober morning suits through the trees. My impromptu captor watched me jealously till I went forward and spoke to another official who was present. Then I strolled back to see what the gardener would say. He was quite obviously relieved.

"You'll excuse me, sir, I know," he apologized, "but seein' that the King and Queen are here, and hearin' all about these nihilist chaps and such-like, I thought I ought to make sure of you, you bein' away from the party like, when I saw you. 'Tain't exactly my job, as you might say, but I'd fair enjoy gettin' my hands round the throat o' one o' them bomb-throwin' murderers. I'd show him what it meant to come that stuff with *our* King !"

He held out his hard, sinewy hands for my approval. On the whole, I was rather glad that he had been content with merely arresting me and taking me back to the garden-party. I should have hated him to mistake me for a real nihilist !

There are still some of such gentry in England, and always have been, as my anti-anarchism activities at the Yard very clearly taught me. Whether they direct their insane energies against the King, or merely against the State, one cannot so easily discover, since they are rather vague themselves when it comes down to definitions. But I ran up against a man once who swore that he was incited by revolutionaries, and he came very near indeed to spoiling one of the King's pleasure hours in a most dramatic fashion.

A garden-party began my duties on that occasion, too. The Premier had been holding the party, and the King had attended it. I was also present in my official

THE KING HAS ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN FOOTBALL. HERE HE IS SEEN AT WEMBLEY PRESENTING THE F.A. CUP

THE KING AND QUEEN IN CORONATION ROBES

capacity, clad in morning dress like the rest of the guests. The party passed off without incident, so far as I was concerned, and, after the King had returned to Buckingham Palace and I had made my report, I made my way home to change.

Alas ! A policeman's lot is not—always—a happy one. While I was actually getting into a more comfortable suit, my telephone-bell began to ring imperatively. I picked up the receiver, wondering if the call were "private" or "duty". I soon knew !

"I want Mr. Fitch !" exclaimed a voice under tension of high excitement. "A confidential message for Mr. Fitch. You must come at once to the Opera House, Covent Garden. Yes, at once. This is the manager speaking."

I put down the telephone and bundled into my morning suit again, as the quickest thing I could find, though it was now late afternoon. I ran out into the street, jumped into a passing taxi, and told the driver to go hell-for-leather to the Opera House.

"I'm a detective officer," I said. "Go fast—never mind anything else."

He took me at my word, and sped past the outstretched arms of traffic police and down side-turnings, making pedestrians gape after us as we fled by. It was lucky there were no Belisha Beacons in those days.

As I sat in the taxi, bumping up and down because of our speed, I wondered what was happening at Covent Garden. I knew that the King and Queen, and some of the royal children, were at a performance there. And the manager's voice, on my telephone, had sounded so very scared.

As we swung round in front of the great theatre, I

jumped from the moving taxi, shouted to the man to wait, and raced into the vestibule. There I found the white-faced manager, backed by a knot of officials and a uniformed policeman.

"Thank God you've come in time," muttered the manager. "Come this way. There's a man outside the Royal Box. He's got a skull and crossbones on his shirt-front, and we are afraid to go near him in case he bursts into the box and harms the King and Queen."

A minute later, I had entered the passage leading to the King's box. A grey-moustached theatre "sergeant" stood bristling there, and, beyond him, I saw a tall man in dress clothes, with a realistic skull and crossbones device drawn in Indian ink on his shirt-front. His right hand rested in his pocket, and I wondered briefly whether it held a bomb or revolver. Faintly, from the stage, I could hear a crescendo of fiddles.

I walked swiftly forward, and at the same time the man put his hand on the door-handle of the box.

"Don't do that!" I called, as loudly as I dared. "His Majesty will have you removed."

"Who are you?" he asked, pausing and glaring at me ferociously. I watched the hand that still rested in his pocket, and now I was certain that it held something.

"I am one of the King's entourage," I whispered, standing close to him, ready to prevent him dashing into the box where the members of the Royal Family sat watching the opera. "Listen to me. The attendants inside would seize you the moment you put your head in the box. You'd have no chance to see the King, if that's what you want. Now, come outside with me, and we'll wait till the King comes out. His attendants

will be *behind* him then, and you can speak to him before anyone can interfere."

The opera was nearly over, and I had to be quick in what I did. At the same time, we could not have a scene there. Had the Queen, or one of the royal children, on seeing this wild apparition so close to them, uttered a cry, I think there might have been a lynching.

The man stared suspiciously at me. At last, without a word, he turned to follow me. Motioning back the attendants in the corridor, I led my man out into the street, while the orchestra gathered its powers for the final orgy of sound that always precedes the end of a grand opera.

"You must consider yourself under arrest," I began, as we got into the open air. I was still watching the man's right hand in his pocket.

He brought it out like a flash, not holding a weapon but a paper. Then he suddenly attacked me with maniac force. There was a short, fierce struggle, and then the policeman and I managed to bundle him into my waiting taxi, and we drove off, I sitting on his chest, only just before the King emerged.

As I had suspected the moment I saw his wild eyes, the man was quite mad. The paper he had been holding was covered with a senseless rigmarole, something between a petition and a poem. He told strange tales about anarchist instigators, but how true they were I cannot say. He was subsequently certified by several mental specialists to be insane, and placed in an asylum.

When I had finished with him, I went and got my lunch, though tea would have been more appropriate by that time !

Everyone knows, of course, that the King is a great

lover of horses, and a keen judge of them too. There is an amusing story that when he was Prince of Wales, his father, King Edward, forbade him to start a stable of his own, saying : "One loser is enough for the family !" Be that as it may, King Edward's stables were often successful, and His Majesty has followed the traditions of racing success that the late King created.

I have very often attended the races when the King went, and have some happy memories of them. Some of my pleasantest recollections of His Majesty are recalled by a mental snapshot of the brown, bearded face watching through field-glasses as the thundering horses swept round some of England's most famous race-courses.

Vivid among these royal race memories there stands out one that dates back to 1913, when I was on duty in attendance on His Majesty at the Derby. His horse Anmer was running in the great race, and was fancied as winner by many knowledgeable people. I was particularly anxious to see Anmer win, because I had been present in attendance on King Edward when Minoru, for the first time on record, carried the royal colours to victory in a Derby, and the public enthusiasm on that day was something never to be forgotten.

Anmer look in splendid form, glossy and supple, and I could not resist backing him for a place. The horses pawed and pranced in pride and beauty, the sun beat down on the thronged sweep of the Downs, officials moved anxiously to and fro. And then suddenly there rose the familiar, breath-taking roar—"They're off !"

I watched the horses string out, amid the thud of hoofs and the rising babel of the crowds, and then I glanced round by habit at His Majesty. He was watching through his glasses, and his face grew tense with excite-

ment as his colours were gradually carried to the front, while the shouting rose to a terrific crescendo. I became more interested in the King's face, reflecting the fortunes of his horse, than in the race itself.

After two endless minutes, the leading horses approached Tattenham Corner—the place where so many Derbys have been lost and won. Now I had eyes only for the gleaming form of Anmer, with the little monkey figure of the jockey well forward on its neck, urging it on and on.

Then, heralded by a shriek of warning and fear from a thousand throats, a woman in long skirts slipped under the rails, eluded outstretched arms, and ran swiftly under the feet of the King's horse !

Horse, jockey, and woman were flung, like a bursting bomb, on the green turf. Another horse, just behind, splayed out its legs and slid by with only inches between it and the prostrate, rolling figures, while a third swerved aside, almost into the rails, and tried to rear. The body of the race swept by, and the thunder of hooves continued unchecked, but was almost instantly drowned by shouts, hisses, screams, and pandemonium from all over the course.

People ran forward under the rails—men in top-hats, one or two women in flimsy frocks, and an ever-growing clot of official blue. The horse was badly injured, the jockey was injured, and the woman, I thought, was dead, judging by her limpness when they picked her up. But she did not die till four days later.

Miss Emily Davison, suffragette and martyr, had made her tragic and ill-guided gesture for what she deemed her "cause".

As the woman ran into the disc of vision of his field-

glasses, the King's face paled under its healthy tan. Next moment he lowered the glasses and turned swiftly to one of his attendants, who immediately hurried off towards the scene of the tragedy. His Majesty looked stricken. With thousands of eyes upon him, he preserved his self-control, but I do not think any race-goer that day felt the horror of the incident so deeply as did the King. I do not believe he even noticed which horse won the race.

I was told later that he had commanded that the injured suffragette's progress should be reported constantly to him, and that his own physicians had been put at the disposal of the authorities who had charge of her. Unhappily, it was quite impossible to save Miss Davison's life ; the injuries she had brought upon herself by her mad leap under the uplifted hoofs were fatal. I think, too, that by causing His Majesty sorrow, she put back the cause of women's emancipation in Britain by angering every loyal subject of the King.

The Derby in 1913 was the most unsatisfactory ever run for another reason. The first horse to finish was Craganour, the favourite. There was apparently some disagreement among the stewards about this horse's running—the incident of Miss Davison had unsettled everybody present, I think. Eventually, someone shouted : "All right !" and money began to change hands.

A moment later, someone shouted sharply : "Stop ! Bring that horse here !"

The former signal had been given by an unauthorized person ; and now chaos ensued. For an agonizing half-hour the stewards took evidence from the judge and various of the jockeys, and then it was announced that

Craganour was disqualified for boring, and the race was awarded to Aboyeur, a 100 to 1 outsider, who was the second horse in.

Many people present thought that the trouble had been made by Aboyeur himself. Much money had already been paid out; and my last memory of that unhappy Derby Day is of police trying to stop fights and quarrels all over Epsom Downs!

The suffragettes, incidentally, gave me one of the most awkward moments of my career as a royal detective. It was at a charity performance at His Majesty's Theatre before the war, and Their Majesties were both present.

The show was, as always, a splendid one, and everything was going perfectly towards the climax of a great performance when several women, evidently at some prearranged signal, jumped to their feet and shouted in shrill chorus: "Why don't Your Majesties stop the brutal treatment of women suffragists?"

There was a tremendous sensation. Everybody stared at the women, and a number of people tried to quiet them; but they went on shouting at the Royal Box so much that the performance came temporarily to a stop. Police, detectives, and theatre attendants gathered, and were forced more or less to hustle the women from the building, where they were disturbing everybody present.

The suffragettes clung to the stalls, and round the necks of near-by spectators, who looked most embarrassed, and for a short time the whole place was in an indescribable uproar. Minor fights started in half a dozen parts of the auditorium.

I had taken up my position by the door of the Royal Box, to prevent any agitators from attempting to force a

way inside and further annoying the King and Queen. But, to be candid, I did not relish my job. When the noise in the theatre was dying down, I suddenly heard footsteps padding swiftly along the carpeted passage towards me. I put on my most forbidding air, but really I was praying to all my gods that it might not prove to be a militant lady ; and, when a young man almost ran into me and waved some leaflets in my face, I believe I smiled quite pleasantly in my relief as I dropped my hand on his shoulder. You see, women in those gallant days were so uncommonly thorough, and one never quite knew how best to deal with them !

The young man, however, was another matter. He gave a shout of anger as he saw me, and waited sullenly till a breathless policeman came along and led him away. He had made no effort, after seeing me blocking his way, to continue his project of entering the Royal Box, and I felt quite sorry for him. At the same time, I reflected that a woman would never have abandoned the attempt as meekly as he had done, and I blessed the destiny that had sent him instead.

That was one of the rare occasions when Their Majesties' pleasure was disturbed by ill-advised persons. I can recall one other instance of a somewhat similar nature. Actually, in the whole of my career, I have hardly ever been present when this sort of thing has taken place. It is one of the most significant indications of the respect and affection felt for our Royal Family that whereas foreign kings are often disturbed, sometimes violently, by subjects who wish to air a grievance or obtain an end, our own rulers are only most rarely troubled in such a way. Perhaps it is because they are always approachable and sympathetic.

The second incident of which I have to tell happened many years ago, before the war, when the King and Queen were in Scotland for the autumn shooting. It is not generally realized what a fine shot His Majesty is with a sporting gun ; even now, at the age of seventy, he is one of the six best marksmen in England, though he prefers to shoot for exercise, and is not interested in obtaining a "slaughterhouse" bag.

At this time, in the Highlands, he was getting splendid weather and magnificent sport. The birds were active, the moors fresh and sweet, and the colourings of some of the sunsets something I shall never forget.

One Sunday morning, when Their Majesties had driven down from Balmoral Castle to the humble little church of Crathie, where it is their custom to join their tenants and villagers at worship, a party of "rubberneck" tourists—I fear their noisy whisperings branded them as hopeless Yankees,. though we have examples just as bad in England too—came crowding into the beautiful little church, candidly intent on watching the King and Queen at prayer.

The homely crofters of the neighbourhood are far too gently bred to show any consciousness of the royal party's presence, and their quietness made the craning of necks, the nasal asides, and the maddening shuffling of feet from the transatlantic visitors all the more noticeable.

While this particular service took place, one could feel a cold and silent fury of antagonism spreading almost visibly among the stern shepherds and farmers who made up the bulk of the congregation. The preacher was wonderful ; he ignored the undertone of foreign interruption as if it had not existed. But, for all that,

one could imagine that some dim fate was impending over the sightseers' careless and restless heads.

I know His Majesty was annoyed too, for there is nothing he resents so much as an unwarrantable intrusion into the privacy of his worship.

When the King and Queen left the church, the Americans stayed in their seats, goggling and nudging. I noticed with some surprise that, contrary to the usual custom, the rest of the worshippers left almost immediately, and that the church officials had already disappeared. I began to suspect what was to follow, and, sure enough, I had no sooner emerged than I saw a forbidding-looking "elder" in rusty black come hurrying towards the church door and turn the big key in the lock.

There are times when wise men know nothing. I merely gave the janitor "Good day!" and strolled reflectively out of sight—and hearing.

Later in the day, the village was talking gloomily of the sad misfortune that had occurred, whereby a number of sightseers had unfortunately got themselves locked inside the church, and had not been able to make themselves heard till long after lunch-time.

"It is to be hoped that they used the interval in sober and necessary meditation, for much they needed it," one unsmiling old shepherd remarked severely. "They could learrn much frae the dogs i' the porrch."

It was true. The sheepdogs, accompanying their masters as a matter of course, lay quietly in the outer porch during service, watching the door with cloud-grey faithful eyes.

In the Highlands, the King is loved with the wild, hot-blooded affection that can only be given to a

descendant of the Royal Stuarts. And a gallant figure of a Chieftain he makes, as he swings along so sturdily in his tartans across the heather that never trips his feet, though it is said to tug at the toe of all strangers, and I can vouch that it has upset *me* more than once !

It is one of the sorrows of His Majesty's latter years that his doctors will not let him go deerstalking any more. At one time he was the admiration of his ghillies and friends alike, and could spend days crawling through the heather on the misty mountains, following the flitting stags through glen and forest, and often bringing down the finest "head" of the whole day's bag.

It has been my privilege, on several occasions, to watch the King indulging in another sport—his favourite of them all. He won his first cup for yacht-racing when he was a middy on the *Bacchante*, and the tiny trophy of that great day is still proudly preserved amid the massive gold and silver trophies that His Majesty has since won at Cowes, on the Turf, and elsewhere.

I remember vividly, as I write, the start and finish of a great race I saw some years ago at Cowes, in which the King was steering his own yacht, *Britannia*, against *Shamrock*, *White Heather*, and others of the famous white-winged boats that make the Isle of Wight so gay in the summer months.

I am not a yachtsman, and cannot describe in technical language the artistry of that race. I only know that it thrilled me and some thousands of other watchers, so that for the time we forgot everything in the world except the swift heeling of the white sails, the curdy tracks of straining, slender ships, and the sturdy figure in oilskins and white naval cap guiding the destiny of the yacht we all hoped and longed would win.

The day was a gusty one, with scudding white clouds fleeing by overhead, and a keen breeze shrilling through the rigging of the vessel from which I watched the race. We rocked gently at anchor among the forest of bare poles which had grown up in a night in Cowes harbour ; then the little brass cannon of the Royal Yacht Squadron banged, and the competitors were off.

As the yachts were gathering way, an old sailor at the rail beside me jogged me violently and screamed : "Look at that !"

Along the water towards the yachts there raced suddenly a dark-blue line, with white foam-tips in its teeth and a pile of water before it. As the sailor called, I noticed the King, who was passing quite near us at the time, glance swiftly up, shout something imperative to his crew, and give the wheel of *Britannia* a sudden spin.

Then the squall took the yachts, and with a clap like a cannon-shot, *Shamrock* staggered sideways as one of her smaller sails tore away. She swayed as though she had been spanked by a giant's hand, shivered as if in shame and agony, and slid aside, abandoning the race. But the King's yacht, owing to that skilful twist of the wheel, was saved from disaster. She bowed down and down, curtsying like a ballerina, down till her rail was in the water, her decks horribly aslant, and her sails almost dipping. But the King, who has held so courageously to the helm of State through so many storms, kept his place and righted his vessel, so that she actually drew ahead of her rivals as a result of the unexpected gust.

The shout of acclamation that greeted His Majesty's seamanship sent every ship in the harbour straining at its cables, as though it, too, thrilled with pride to belong to the country of this Sailor King. But the sturdy

figure aboard the *Britannia* never for a moment brought his eyes back from the course ahead.

"They can say what they like !" exclaimed the old salt at my side, thumping the rail for emphasis till I wondered if it would stand the strain. "If His Majesty went over to try for the America Cup, he'd bring it back. I've seen all the big skippers, and I tell you I know !"

The royal yacht must have lost way somewhat in the course of the race, for when the vessels came into sight again she and *White Heather* were neck and neck. I began to suppose we should see a dead heat, but at the last moment the King edged *Britannia* over a shade, and she came gliding across the finishing-line first.

I was surprised to find myself both hoarse and deaf when the cheering died down. I had contributed to the hoarseness, but I was surprised at the lack of hearing till I discovered that the old sailor beside me was leaning, exhausted and blue in the face, over the rail. Then I knew who had made me deaf ! I think everyone within a mile was in much the same state, anyhow !

One of the King's keenest interests is to watch really good association football. It is, of course, well known that he goes, whenever his health and other duties allow him, to see the Final at Wembley. He goes there because he thoroughly enjoys every minute of the play, and follows it with an appreciation of the finer details that would surprise most professional players.

I remember being in attendance upon him, on Easter Monday, 1920, at another kind of football final—the deciding game of the Army Cup-Ties at Aldershot. The finalists were the 1st Battalion Hampshire Regiment and the R.A.M.C. It was the first Army Final since the war, and the attendance was tremendous.

I had noticed that the King looked rather tired and concerned before the match, as well he might have been in those trying times after the war had ended. But once the whistle shrilled for the kick-off the frown was smoothed from his face, and his eyes grew bright and eager as he watched his Army at play.

It was obvious from the first minute that the Hampshires, in their black-and-yellow shirts, were the favourites, probably because the regiment belonged to the locality. The ground rang with thunderous yells of "Come on, the Wasps !" every time they touched the ball.

For ten minutes the red shirts of the medicos were swept helplessly to and fro, but they defended dourly. Army football always strikes me as being faster than the professional game ; the men are so very whole-hearted, and follow the ball at incredible speed.

The R.A.M.C. left back was a particularly fine player. Time after time this sturdy figure moved up and met an advance, the Hampshires' attack breaking round him like waves round a rock. The King followed the play with obvious pleasure, and presently turned to one of his attendants and asked the name of this outstanding player.

"Private Osborne, sir," was the reply.

"He's worth a lot to them," said the King enthusiastically. "I'm going to watch him."

There was no score at half-time, and during the interval His Majesty keenly discussed the game, and again expressed his admiration of Private Osborne's play. It was a delight to me, and I think to everyone within sight, to observe how the King had changed under the stimulus of the match. He looked five years younger than when he entered the stand.

After the game started again, the struggle increased in intensity. Time after time the "Wasps" came swarming down the field, only to be stopped by that impenetrable defence.

Finally Osborne himself changed his tactics. Instead of clearing with his usual tremendous kick, he ran swiftly upfield with the ball at his toes, passing opponent after opponent. His own men were unready for the move, but they pelted along on either side of him, ready to help.

His Majesty leaned forward, watching through his field-glasses the sturdy back in the faded shirt as he twisted and turned at unexpected speed towards the far goal, while an ever-increasing knot of black-and-yellow swooped towards him. He was within ten or fifteen yards of the enemy citadel when, realizing that he could not force his way through the onrushing opponents, he feinted to kick at goal, saw the opposing goalie run into the corner to anticipate the shot, and then swiftly tried to kick the ball sideways to one of his own forwards who was unmarked.

Alas for Private Osborne ! His foot slid over the top of the ball, and he himself went to the ground with a sickening bump. He was up in a second, and the ball rolled away, but not fast enough. It was trapped and cleared. Without a moment's hesitation, Osborne began to pound downfield again, and got back to his own position in time to stop yet another attack on the home goal.

After the game, the teams were presented to His Majesty. He spoke a few words to each man, and especially congratulated Private Osborne. The soldier's face, still splashed with dust and sweat, stained a dull red.

"When I saw you go down after that run, I believe I

was as disappointed as you were!" said the King, smiling.

"If I'd known that, Your Majesty, I'd have got through if I'd bust for it!" muttered the player.

The King and Queen, who was also present, were obviously pleased and touched by the real sincerity that rang behind the tired warrior's perhaps unconstitutional remark!

CHAPTER IV

His Majesty at home—Royal residences in Britain—Suffragettes in the Throne Room—The outbreak of war, and its end—The King's hobbies—An American story.

It is hard to imagine the "home" of a King. The stately figure with which the nation becomes familiar is always seen going about public duties, attending public amusements, passing in state through public streets. If one thinks at all of life at a palace, it seems as though it must needs be equally formal.

In the case of our present King, this is not so. He is no automaton living by rote among gorgeous marionettes, but a quiet, courtly gentleman whose gracious personality has so far triumphed over circumstance that his royal residences are homes indeed, where an atmosphere of human welcome greets even us who are on duty there, and the cold necessities of pageantry are subdued by the kindly geniality of the royal personality.

The residences most used by the King and Queen are Buckingham Palace, the royal castle of Windsor, Sandringham—chiefly utilized now as a country-seat—Holyrood in Edinburgh, and Balmoral in the Highlands of Scotland. Of them all, the King is said to prefer his London residence, and I certainly like it best of those which it has been my privilege to visit.

Buckingham Palace was not originally intended for

a royal dwelling. Like St. James's, which was once a hospital for leprous maidens, it was constructed for quite another purpose. But it was bought by George III from the Duke of Buckingham, whose town house it was, and it has been considerably altered since then. Queen Victoria made it famous, but King George has won for it something greater still: an affection which makes every member of the British confederation of nations look towards it as the very heart of Empire.

Some of the State apartments within the Palace are magnificent in the extreme. The Throne Room, indeed, is an astonishment to all visiting sovereigns, even the native rulers from the gorgeous East.

But the King prefers certain other rooms—quieter rooms where pomp is disregarded for dignity and pleasant comfort. His study is a typical example. A room obviously intended for work rather than repose, its desk is frequently covered with papers.

We of England should be very proud of a ruler who is great enough, while governing half the world, to be neither a war lord, a self-seeker, nor a posing dictator, but simply a loyal, courageous, and unassuming leader.

His Majesty's duties leave him little time for leisure, but what he has he spends enthusiastically. He is really proud of his gardens, and indeed the gardens at Buckingham Palace and Sandringham are some of the finest I have ever seen.

I remember once accompanying the King and Queen to the Chelsea Flower Show. Just previously, there had been some severe late frosts, and many of the most promising colour-schemes in the royal gardens had been ruined as a result.

"In Norfolk, I had nine degrees, seven degrees,

and seven degrees in three successive nights!" His Majesty remarked sadly to one of the exhibitors. "I suppose you had no frosts in the Isle of Wight? You are always so fortunate down there!"

On that occasion, some exquisite white carnations were presented to the Queen. She held them up for His Majesty to smell.

"I like the white ones best of all," he exclaimed, "and now I can get them all the year round."

In the orchid tent, the King greatly admired a glorious red trumpet-shaped flower, and asked for its history. It was a case of one of his own myriad kind deeds finding him out!

"Your Majesty sent me the bulbs from a collection of plants sent from the Malay States," said the famous exhibitor, smiling. "It has developed into a wonderful specimen, hasn't it!"

And indeed it had, for it was already the winner of a special Award of Merit, and seemed to me one of the most beautiful flowers I had ever seen.

Of later years the King finds a fresh interest in the gardens of Buckingham Palace, for he plays hide-and-seek there now with his little grand-daughters, the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret Rose. The children are instant favourites with everyone, and it has often been notable, on public occasions, how His Majesty has quietly helped or guided them when perhaps they found their height too little to see something important that was happening, or when the excitement of the moment made them temporarily forget their own small parts in the ceremonial.

One of my early memories of Buckingham Palace concerns a time when I was on duty there, when no

amount of detective vigilance was able to prevent a most unfortunate scene.

Their Majesties were seated in the gorgeous Throne Room, and favoured persons were passing through, making the official curtsy or bow, and being presented before the thrones. The atmosphere was one of pre-war exactness and dignity.

Suddenly a lady went down on her knees before the King and Queen, and cried out, "Oh, Your Majesties, please won't you stop all this torturing of women !"

The atmosphere of that stately place became suddenly electric. Suffragette disturbances had occurred elsewhere, and even in the Royal presence, as I have recounted in an earlier chapter, but it had never been anticipated that the Throne Room itself could be invaded. Moreover, Their Majesties had obviously no part in the treatment of law-breaking suffragettes, who, if my experience was worth anything, usually sought to bring suffering on their own heads in order that they might then attract notoriety as martyrs.

One of the Palace officials hurried forward and took the kneeling lady gently by the arm. Crying bitterly with disappointment and excitement, she allowed herself to be led away, and we had to see that she left the Palace.

It was not generally realized at the time that almost everyone present was in sympathy with her, though not with her unconstitutional way of expressing her views. Perhaps she herself, though she was rather hysterical at the time, realized afterwards that it was the height of rudeness to put such an affront on Palace etiquette, and that it must have caused Their Majesties considerable unpleasantness.

I have been told by persons likely to know that the Queen, and also the King, made kindly inquiries after the suffragette when she had left the Palace, and were, to some extent, personally in sympathy with her views. But the suffrage problem was one to be settled in Parliament, not in the Palace. Whatever views the Royal Family may have held, they could not show anything other than disapproval in public for anyone who thus caused a scene in the Throne Room.

I don't think it matters now, however, to disclose that the lady in question never received any punishment or royal censure for her act, and that her courage was appreciated, though it could not be recognized.

A scene at Buckingham Palace which I think no one who saw it will ever forget was that which took place on the outbreak of war in 1914. The vast concourse of people outside the iron gates waved their straw hats and cheered till it seemed that the very foundations of the great building rocked in response. All night they stayed, becoming tighter and tighter massed. It was a demonstration of loyalty and assurance that can seldom have been equalled.

And, through it all, the King anxiously debated with his Ministers, and paced restlessly up and down the carpeted floor of his study. On his shoulders lay the final responsibility for plunging the British Empire into bloodshed and loss that the King realized must be colossal beyond anything in history. The honour and future of the English-speaking world was at stake. It was a decision terrible to contemplate, and there, with the murmuring of his people's cheering coming faintly to him, the King had to stand alone and decide.

If the cheering of that dreadful night was ever

surpassed, I suppose the occasion would have been that of November 11th, 1918, when the news ran like wildfire through London that the war was won. Once again the Palace was besieged, and this time the King, aged by the toll that the four black years had taken of him, came out on the balcony in person before the cheering could be checked. And afterwards it went on more triumphantly than ever.

Very shortly after the war had ended, I was on duty one day in connection with a royal procession in London when I noticed a wild-looking little man with lank black hair and a slouchy black hat worming his way through the crowd, trying to push to the front of the people who were waiting for the royal coach to pass. He was causing a good deal of disturbance, because naturally the early arrivals did not want to be pushed out of their places of vantage. Also, he carried a bulging black bag, of which he was taking the most extraordinary precautions. So gingerly did he handle it that I could not help wondering if it contained an infernal machine.

"Don't push other people out of their places," I said, touching him on the shoulder. "And do you mind telling me what you have got in that bag?"

He turned on me with a queer smile.

"You're one of the royal detectives, I guess?" he said. "Wal, I'm Wallis Q. Heaton of Noo York. If you knoo anything about stamps, young man, you'd know *me*! I got stamps in this bag! See here!"

He snapped it open, and it seemed full of thousands and thousands of postage stamps of various countries, used and unused.

"But the best air not in there!" he added cunningly.

He shot a hand into an inner pocket, and pulled out a blue, faded stamp.

"*The* twopenny Mauritius!" he announced, as if it were the Koh-i-noor diamond. "And I'm here to *ex*-change it with the King!"

He plunged the stamp back again into his pocket as swiftly as a conjuror, and snapped his bag shut. He looked more than a little mad.

"You can't do stamp exchanges with His Majesty in the street, when he's in the State coach," I said, trying to hide my laughter.

"Then how can I do them?" he snapped.

I advised him to send the stamps he wished to exchange to the King's Secretary at Buckingham Palace, in the usual way, explaining all about them. I don't know whether he really meant to try to stop the royal coach; it seems insane, but so did he. Incidentally, if the stamp he showed me was not a forgery, I believe it was worth several thousand pounds.

He waited quite quietly till the royal coach approached, and then, when everyone else was hurrahing, he was shouting at the top of a powerful voice—"Stamps! Stamps!" However, the noise drowned his addition to it; and except that one or two people in the neighbourhood stared at him in surprise, the incident passed unnoticed.

I have often wondered since whether he sent any stamps to His Majesty's Secretary, in the hope of exchanging them with the King. I never heard any more of the matter.

I suppose everyone knows, nowadays, that His Majesty's greatest hobby is stamp-collecting. To a king, such a pastime is almost equivalent to making a collec-

tion of portraits of his brother sovereigns. Two afternoons of every week King George sets aside for work on his wonderful stamp collection. He has a special room in Buckingham Palace entirely devoted to his hobby. It is lighted by artificial daylight so perfect that the finest grades of colour can be detected there, even on the darkest day; and there, assisted by leading experts, His Majesty poıes over the tiny, flimsy bits of paper, examines them through magnifying-lenses, tests them for colour, perforation, and watermark, lists and catalogues them, and conducts exchanges with collectors who have the rarities which the King's collection still lacks.

All over the world, dealers and collectors watch for stamps that might be likely to interest him. He is one of the foremost living experts on philately, and his collection, sometimes shown in the British Museum, is worth a tremendous sum. It is probably the best of its kind in the world, and belongs personally to His Majesty, who began it in the days when he was a middy on the *Bacchante*, travelling round the British Empire.

There is a charming little story of a pre-war schoolboy—he is grown up now and may even read his tale here—who was anxious to add something to the King's stamp collection. The youngster had been given by an uncle an old stamp-album containing a lot of specimens which the uncle had collected when stamps were first being issued. Among these was a block of unused Australian stamps, much prized by philatelists, with the black swan of the Dominion on them. The boy tore off a couple of them, and, in a moment of enthusiasm, put them in an envelope addressed to "The King, Buckingham Palace", together with a note beginning

Majesty, and explaining the circumstances of the case.

When the young collector received a formal acknowledgement of his letter, he was wildly delighted, and showed it to all his friends as a proof that he had really sent the King some stamps. What was his delirious joy when, a day or two later after the stamps had been examined, he received a note, with a message from His Majesty himself, and sent care of his parents, asking whether he would rather receive stamps in exchange or would prefer to sell the stamps to the King. For the boy had been under the impression that they had been accepted as a gift.

It is this genius for the human touch that has always chiefly endeared his Majesty to his people.

And indeed, as I learned from my detective duties in connection with him, the King is a very human ruler. He is utterly without pretence or insincerity. He dislikes ultra-modern music, for instance. Although Buckingham Palace and Windsor contain some of the finest old masters in the world of painting, and especially certain pictures of the Dutch school, their royal owner is not particularly enthusiastic about them. For all that, he is a great patron of the arts, and is one of the most frequent visitors to present-day art exhibitions of all kinds.

He is becoming increasingly fond of "pictures" of another sort. As long ago as 1912, I was on duty at the Scala Theatre when he went to see the first colour-film shown in England. Nowadays, I believe, selected talkies are shown in Buckingham Palace itself.

In innumerable ways the King has demonstrated his simplicity of outlook and dislike of all forms of

pretence. He has almost ceased to use the royal "we" in proclamations; he prefers to say "the Queen and myself".

Again, he pays constant public tribute to the royal lady who has shared his difficulties and responsibilities for so long. When he came to the throne, he said: "I am encouraged by the fact that in my dear wife I have one who will be a constant helpmeet in every endeavour for our people's good." He has often reiterated those words.

I have said elsewhere that His Majesty is an indefatigable worker. I believe it is fourteen years since he had his last real holiday; how many of us could say as much? He was in the Mediterranean then, on the *Victoria and Albert*. He has been away from London since, but never on holiday out of England, and always he has been attended by secretaries, and working for at least a part of each day, except when his health has made it impossible, on State business. Even after his serious illness a year or two ago, he refused to go abroad.

The King prefers simple food, and though the royal wardrobe contains about a hundred and fifty suits (most of them uniforms and robes of various sorts), he wears comfortable and ordinary—though immaculately cut—clothes. He does not care for turn-up trousers, and wears his crease at the sides instead of in the front.

In mentioning His Majesty's interests, I should perhaps have referred to the innumerable charities in which he is a participant. Thousands of pounds find their way to deserving causes each year from the royal purse. The King is always the first contributor to any fund to alleviate national suffering or disaster.

In this connection, I remember an incident which

happened shortly after the war, when a mine catastrophe in Wales sent a shock of horror through England. Immediately the news was known, various people took preliminary steps to try to raise a substantial fund for the widows and children of the pit victims.

One of the persons approached was an American millionaire, at that time staying at the Ritz. This prince of industry, who was notably generous, offered a very substantial sum if his pseudonym—"An incognito Yankee"—could head the list of subscribers.

Later, it was discovered that the King had already offered a contribution, and the fund organizer went, in fear and trembling, to the American magnate, pointing out to him that his soubriquet would have to come second after all.

"Wal," snapped the great man, after hearing the reason, "I never guessed your King'd worry himself about a mine blow-out. I don't believe in kings, but I reckon I'm proud to come second to a man like that. And—as I'm number two instead of one now—I'll give you two cheques. That seems dern appropriate to me !"

He sat down there and then and wrote out two cheques, each for the original amount he had offered, though he still insisted on remaining anonymous. That, to my mind, was a typical gesture from a typical American.

When His Majesty heard of that act of generosity, it almost certainly added to his known liking for Americans, which was demonstrated strongly later on, when he received Charles Lindbergh, the young lone flyer of the Atlantic, at the Palace, and personally congratulated him on his great flight.

Besides the charitable contributions which are

publicly announced, the King makes hundreds of private gifts each year to needy cases, as his detectives know well.

Particularly does he keep himself informed of the circumstances of all who have ever served him, in no matter what humble capacity. It is said that he knows every one of his thousand or more immediate employees by name. Certainly it is a fact that he knows at once if any former servant or dependant of his is in need or worry. More than one blessing has been offered up, within my own knowledge, because some relative of a former Palace servant has been saved, by secretly given royal bounty, from the bitter extremes of sudden misfortune and poverty.

It would be an omission to conclude any account of the King's home life without some reference to his real and courageous Christian faith. In that, he is an example to the nation, head of whose Church he is.

Whether he is in Buckingham Palace or at Windsor, at Sandringham or Balmoral, he invariably attends morning service on Sunday if he is well enough to do so. Once, shortly after the war, when an attack of influenza prevented him from leaving his rooms, a Court Circular announced that "the Queen attended divine service".

The omission of any mention of the King set a rumour going in certain newspapers that His Majesty was seriously ill. Such a hold did the tale obtain that the royal physicians were compelled to issue a report stating exactly what had happened.

Undoubtedly the King's steadfast faith has upheld him through the terrible responsibilities of his eventful reign. In the small circle in which I moved, serving His Majesty in various capacities, that faith and simple

confidence have given untold encouragement and help at times when we needed it most.

It is a proud task to be in the King's service, and sometimes an arduous one; but whatever we were called upon to do we had only to look at the man for whom we worked to see an example worth all the effort we could give to strive to follow. And, indeed, we did follow as best we could.

CHAPTER V

The Queen of England—Delight in household affairs—"Queen Mary strawberry puffs"—In the homes of her subjects—A charming gesture—Her Majesty during the war—The Queen's antiques.

WHEN a girl is asked by the future King of England to become his bride, what a world of responsibility weighs upon the answer! To be suddenly exalted towards sharing the highest throne on earth might make the bravest woman tremble.

Yet, looking back on Queen Mary's record, we see the life-story of the most dignified queen in Europe, the most respected, and, I think, the most widely loved woman in the world. Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria have in her a worthy successor.

During my detective attendance on King Edward and Queen Alexandra, during the late King's reign, I often saw Queen Mary, but I do not remember that my duties brought me officially the task of assisting in preserving safety and order for her until the wonderful occasion of her Coronation with the King as joint rulers of the British Empire.

On that glorious mid-June day, London was packed and thronged with wildly cheering crowds, between which the royal cavalcade passed. When the procession reached Westminster Abbey, the scene was one of fairy-

tale glamour. The King, in crimson robes, followed by nobles bearing his train and with Beefeaters guarding his person, was almost surpassed in splendour by Her Majesty, whose train was borne by four duchesses, and who was preceded by the two archbishops.

When the Archbishop of Canterbury later presented the Orb to the King, he said : "When you see the Orb set under the Cross, remember that the world is subject to the power of Christ, our Redeemer."

Queen Mary was then crowned, and immediately made her obeisance to His Majesty as his first subject. The magnificent and beautiful young Queen kneeling to the splendid King was a sight no one who saw it can ever forget.

It would seem fatally easy for a woman set amid such pomp and majesty to forget the gentle dignity and quiet charm that made so notable Queen Alexandra's personality, for example. If such be the case, then Queen Mary has most wonderfully triumphed over circumstance and environment, for she is a woman beloved and respected by other women, from her ladies-in-waiting down to the humble cottagers and tenement-dwellers, whom she so often visits in their own homes.

The whole atmosphere of Buckingham Palace seems to me to have softened and become more beautiful since the present Queen's sojourn there. King Edward's spiritual home was Sandringham ; he and Queen Alexandra liked Buckingham Palace almost as little as did Queen Victoria. But Queen Mary has wrought a miracle ; she has transmuted the wide, stony building, that always seemed so soulless before her advent, into a royal home.

I cannot tell you how the magic has been achieved,

though everyone who has known the Palace in the last thirty years can testify to the change. Perhaps one of the reasons may be that the Queen has always taken such a human interest in domestic details. It is said that she sometimes prepares with her own hands favourite dishes for the King. She has certainly permitted her name to be used to designate a variety of strawberry puffs of which His Majesty is very fond, and on certain Buckingham Palace menus appear the magic words : "Queen Mary strawberry puffs", or at least the French version of the same, since the Palace menus are printed in French. *Pêches à la George V* is another item of a similar kind. Perhaps it is in such apparently trivial details that the secret of home-making lies.

The Queen has always been just as interested in the houses of her subjects as in her own palaces. I recall a charming incident which occurred a year or two before the war, when I was on detective duty during a tour made by Their Majesties through some of London's tenement property in the south-east of the metropolis. I was told at the time that the tour was undertaken at the special request of the Queen, who had been touched to pity by one of the many strange letters that are addressed to her at Buckingham Palace. This one in particular had been sent by an old lady who lived in one of the tenements. It is characteristic of Her Majesty that she reads each one of these letters herself, so that she shall keep in touch with the feelings of her subjects, and, on occasions too numerous to be counted, she sends to needy cases the most generous—and also the most secret—possible assistance.

As the royal car moved slowly through one of the mean streets, preceded and followed by cheering children

and grown-ups, the Queen suddenly signed to the driver to stop. On a balcony—a terrible affair of concrete, with an iron grid in front of it—sat an old lady of about seventy-five or eighty. The poor old creature had seen the royal car approaching, and was struggling feverishly to rise to her feet, though it was obvious that she was a cripple. The Queen dispatched one of her suite into the house with a message typical of the gracious lady who sent it.

"You must not get up or try to come down," it said. "The Queen would like to *come up* to see you."

And so it happened that, instead of the poor old lady struggling to get down to the street to see her Queen ride by, the tall, fairylike Queen went up the dark, mingy stairs into the narrow little room with the chintz curtains to the window, and out on to the sordid balcony itself.

I like to think that Her Majesty left a ray of sunlight in that cheerless place—a golden ray of memory that neither poverty nor squalor could ever dissipate in the lifetime of that old dame. I can well imagine the tones of quavering pride as the old lady afterwards pointed to one of her chairs and said : "My Queen sat there !" or hobbled about her minute kitchen murmuring : "My Queen touched that saucepan with her own royal hands."

Her Majesty spent some time talking to this overjoyed subject of hers—talking in the kindly, quiet voice we who have served her know, and talking simply, of everyday things, in that gentle way that has endeared her to everyone since she was just Princess May of Teck.

As the cars finally drove away, I looked back and saw the solitary old figure still sitting on the balcony,

motionless, looking after us and dabbing at her eyes. I think she was crying a little with pure happiness.

During the inauguration of the new King's College Hospital by Their Majesties, in 1913, I saw another incident which showed the Queen's extraordinary faculty for making people—even tiny people—feel happy and at ease in her presence.

The King and Queen were received at the Denmark Hill entrance of the hospital by various notables, among whom were the Archbishop of Canterbury and Field Marshal Methuen. They walked round some of the fine new buildings, and then Her Majesty was presented with about a hundred purses, containing funds that various supporters had collected for the hospital.

While this ceremony was proceeding, I noticed a very small girl in a pink frock standing among the purse-bearers who had not yet come up to the Queen. The child was obviously suffering agonies of shyness, and as her turn approached she forgot everything in her panic. No one else seemed to have noticed her, except one or two other children beside her, and they were too awed to do anything except stare at her and nudge one another.

Her turn came, and she simply could not approach the place where Their Majesties waited. Fumbling at her purse, she looked desperately round. In another moment she would have taken to her heels and run, and the little ceremony would have been quite shattered.

The Queen noticed, as she notices everything. She stepped forward and laid a gentle hand on the child's shoulder.

"Why, you surely aren't afraid of me, are you?" she asked, in a low voice.

The baby—she was scarcely more—looked straight up into Her Majesty's eyes, and through her tears came a slow, uncertain, lovely smile.

"Oh no, please, your grace," she whispered back. "I was only afraid of the King !"

Everyone smiled, including His Majesty himself.

"Why," exclaimed the little girl confidentially to the Queen, "he's ever so different when he laughs. I'm not afraid *now* !"

And so the procession of the purse-bearers continued smoothly after all.

When the war brought its tremendous changes to the life and work of the Royal Family, the Queen threw herself whole-heartedly into the task of encouraging and helping the women of England to meet the new necessities. I suppose we shall never know the full details of her work at that time, or how much she was personally responsible for the almost miraculous way in which women organized behind the fighting lines and released men for war service.

Her Majesty travelled all over the country, inspecting Women's Armies, hospitals, training-camps, and factories, and wherever she went she seemed to leave new hope and determination behind.

I remember one amusing incident that brightened an hour of those dark years. One day, when I was in attendance on the Queen, she and Princess Mary went to open one of the first of the great national food kitchens with which England tried to relieve want and distress caused by the German submarine blockade.

All sorts and conditions of people came hurrying into the kitchen, forced by real hunger, but also delighting in the prospect of being served by Her Majesty or the

Princess in person. As a matter of fact, many of the "clients" left even more hurriedly than they came, realizing that they had forgotten to bring plates or basins, which they were supposed to provide for themselves. As soon as they had rushed home and equipped themselves with these necessities, they came crowding back again.

Among the mob on this particular day I noticed an abnormally dirty old man carrying a filthy plate. He ambled towards the Queen, and passed the plate, to receive on it meat, vegetables, and pudding, which he then covered with a rubbed and thumbed bit of old newspaper that he drew from his pocket. He seemed to me to take the honour of being served by a queen very lightly, and as he came slowly out again I touched him on the shoulder.

"Didn't you know who that was?" I asked. "It was Queen Mary who served you with that dinner just now."

He stood staring at me a minute, out of red-rimmed eyes. Then, still clutching his dinner in one hand, he turned and stubbornly fought his way back into the kitchen. There he solemnly raised his battered hat to the Queen three times, never saying a word, and then came walking out again, looking very satisfied.

Early in 1918, Their Majesties went to Lincoln to carry out some inspections there, and it was my duty to accompany them. Lincoln, like every other place they visit in war or peace, was packed with people who had turned out to see them, and among the crowds were innumerable women war-workers.

At one point in the tour of inspection, the King and Queen examined some of the latest-type fast tanks that were being built for use on the French front.

H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES IN WELSH GUARDS UNIFORM

THE KING AND QUEEN PRESENTING THE PRINCE OF WALES TO HIS PEOPLE AT CARNARVON CASTLE

I was, as usual, in mufti, and moved freely among the officials, factory owners, and departmental heads who surrounded the royal couple. Even here, a sprinkling of women workers still persisted, and my notice was attracted to a pair of rather saucy-looking girls whose uniforms became them splendidly but whose faces exhibited signs of considerable uneasiness.

They were little more than children—both under twenty years old, I fancy—and they gazed in adoration at the Queen in particular. But they also kept an eye lifting for someone else. At length I noticed a stern-looking forewoman enter the factory, and immediately the two girls slipped behind a half-built tank very near to me, and in such a position that the new-comer could not see them.

It appeared, however, that she was searching for them, for she glanced keenly about among the knots of people. At length the search became troublesome to the young truants, and one of them whispered to me: "Would you be so kind as to keep between us and that lady there. We've slipped out because we *had* to see the Queen, and now she's after us."

I compounded the innocent felony as well as I could, and anyway the forewoman did not see the fugitives. When she had gone, and the royal party was about to pass on, the girls thanked me very much for helping them.

"It's a good job no one in authority will ever get to know of our bit of fun now," one of them said to me, as they turned reluctantly to go.

"Well," I said, unable to resist a smile. "I'm a royal detective, if you count that!"

They took one look at me, gathered up their skirts and fled.

On this same tour Their Majesties inspected one of the war hospitals at Lincoln, and I witnessed an amusing little incident there that showed how the gay courage of England persisted even in those grim days. I had been chatting for a few moments to the matron of the hospital, when a young officer in the blue uniform of the wounded soldier of that time came limping up and asked if he could see one of the nurses.

"I'm afraid not," the matron replied, looking at him somewhat severely. "They are only allowed by the regulations to see relatives."

"Oh, but, Matron," chirped the lieutenant cheerily, "that's quite all right: I'm her brother."

The matron's calm face relaxed ever so little, and one corner of her mouth twitched. "Really?" she said quietly. "I'm so pleased to meet you. I'm her mother."

Perhaps it is telling tales out of school, but I can't help adding that the regulations were overcome—for that afternoon only—because the matron was a jolly good sort, and I fancy the lieutenant was as lucky in her friendship as in that of the demure nurse who came tripping down the stone stairs a few minutes later, just before I took my leave.

I have one very vivid memory of the Queen after the war. It is of a tiny incident that happened when Their Majesties were attending a special memorial service to Nurse Edith Cavell, at Westminster Abbey.

It must have been very soon after the end of hostilities, for there were numbers of wounded men present in the Abbey for the service. During the chanting of one of the psalms, the Queen whispered to one of her gentlemen-in-waiting, and he leaned over and touched the arm of a man near by.

I had not noticed till that moment, but I saw now that this man's face was white and drawn, and that he was in obvious pain. But the Queen had noticed, and had given instructions that he was to be told to sit down. The Queen notices everything.

She was, I know, very much touched at the death of Nurse Cavell, and the service seemed to affect her deeply. I was later to accompany Their Majesties to Belgium when the Queen visited the spot where the heroic nurse was executed by the Germans, and there, too, Her Majesty seemed much moved.

I suppose most of England knows now that Queen Mary is an ardent collector of antiques, particularly lace and china. One of my most recent memories of her concerns this hobby in which she is so interested.

She noticed, while driving past, some attractive pieces of china in the window of a shop not far from Victoria Station, and went there later to examine the exhibits. Among other items she was shown was a beautifully chased gold snuff-box, which she examined curiously.

"I'm sure I have seen something like this before," she said.

The history of the snuff-box was gone into by the shop-keeper, and it appeared that the box had come from a collection belonging to a German nobleman who was once a close friend of the Duke and Duchess of Teck, the Queen's parents. When Her Majesty was a little girl, this nobleman had shown Princess May, as she then was, his wonderful antiques, and it was that display which first made her desire a collection of her own. It was a queer coincidence that Her Majesty, in a London shop, should eventually purchase—as she did—what was

formerly one of the most treasured gems of the old baron's *objets d'art.*

On another occasion when I was present, the Queen visited a Grafton Street art dealer's to examine a collection of paintings of English gardens. The pictures, which I afterwards saw, were a wonderful tribute to the changeless beauty that is England's, and Her Majesty was delighted with some of them, ordering one to reproduce it on the royal Christmas-card for the following December.

This visit was just before the wedding of Princess Mary to Viscount Lascelles, and London was filled with visitors from all over the world, who had come to see the wedding. Among them were numbers of Americans.

It happened that the Queen's visit to the art gallery was a spontaneous and informal one, and while the royal party was looking at the paintings, an American, with his wife and son, entered the galleries, apparently having received an invitation-card for that afternoon. When the new-comers entered, Her Majesty was sitting at a table, while a director of the galleries brought painting after painting for her inspection.

The American and his family entered without removing their hats ; the gallery was more or less public, and of course they had not the slightest idea that royal persons were present. A short time after they went in, I saw them come out again in a great hurry.

"Say, bo," ejaculated the head of the family to me, grasping my sleeve, while his spouse and son looked on, "do you know your Queen's up there in that art gallery?"

"I'm a detective, so I do happen to know it," I said, smiling at his eagerness.

"But"—he gasped—"but—you mean to tell *me* she

goes places, an' any citizen can go in at the same time? Why, *sir*, I went in with my hat on, an' so did Junior here, an' she didn't even say nuthin' then. We didn't dream!"

I reassured him again that it was really the Queen, and added that Princess Mary and Viscount Lascelles were with her. My interlocutor's eyes bulged.

"Holy smoke!" he muttered. "Then we've been in a room with the Queen and her two children. Now, say——"

He stopped speaking, tore a note-book and pen from his pocket, and scribbled these words:

This certifies that Silas Wertheimer, Mrs. Dilnot Wertheimer and Junior have been in the —— Art Galleries with the Queen of England, the Princess Mary and the Viscount Lascelles. *Signed* ——

I saw no harm in signing it, and he wrote *Royal Detective* beneath my name.

"They're more democratic than our President, Mr. Fitch!" he exclaimed, as he pump-handled me before turning away. "An' we'd never have known, only Junior here recognized the Queen and told me. I hope she won't think we meant to be disrespectful, us havin' our hats on when we went in. It sure wasn't disrespect. No, *sir*! We jest hadn't got no idea. . . . As soon as I knew who it was, we beat it right out into the street. Well, this is a day of experiences. *An'* the Princess, too!"

He was still muttering as he and his little family went off down Grafton Street, and he was so engrossed that he nearly got them all run over by a bus in crossing Bond Street.

The Queen often goes for these little shopping expeditions to various parts of London, and I could tell many tales of astounded shop-keepers who suddenly found that the royal car, with its blank number-plates, had stopped outside their premises. Indeed, it is Her Majesty's pleasure to patronize all sorts of establishments, and bring joy and excitement wherever she sees a place that is obviously carefully kept by a shop-keeper who is rightly proud of his occupation.

But in almost all State journeys and public duties where circumstances permit, the King and Queen go together. It is a mark of the deep comradeship between them—a comradeship that was never more splendidly demonstrated than when His Majesty was ill a year or two ago, and during his long and anxious weeks of convalescence at Bognor. At that time the Queen herself did innumerable things for the invalid that only her own tenderness and courage could have inspired ; and it was a joy to all who attended on Their Majesties to see the sunlight in her face again when at last the King had turned the corner to recovery, and was well on the road to that health which all his subjects wish may last yet for very many hale and happy years.

CHAPTER VI

The most popular young man in the world—The Prince of good fellows—With H.R.H. at Oxford University—The Prince plays football—A lover of the open air—Ranching in Canada—A hunting story.

AN amusing story of the Prince of Wales is told in a diary of Lord Esher. He says :

I was amused today by taking the Wales children, two boys and a girl (now the Prince of Wales, Duke of York, and Princess Mary), to the Abbey. They climbed on to every tomb, and got very dirty, but were thoroughly happy. . . . The second boy is the sharpest, but there is something very taking about Prince Edward.

That "something very taking" has increased with each year that has passed, till the Prince of Wales has become, by universal acclamation, the most popular young man in the world. It has been my privilege to have much to do with the Prince, particularly during his youth and early manhood. I cannot explain or define his charm. He always says the right word and does the right thing, though sometimes they are that triumphant reverse of the conventional that only a happy genius can command. But the attraction is greater than that. Napoleon had it ; Lord Roberts had it ; it is that quality whereby a word and a smile make men willing slaves for life. And the Prince is so generously ready to smile !

One of my first memories of him comes vividly back to me. He and two of his brothers, with Princess Mary, stood at a window of Marlborough House watching a squadron of Life Guards riding into the Friary Court of Buckingham Palace. They were followed by other Guards detachments, and then by a group of officers in brilliant uniforms.

On the balcony overlooking the Court, red-and-gold clad trumpeters appeared and played a fanfare that stirred the heart. State officials followed them, from whom stepped forward the Garter King-of-Arms. While the guardsmen below stood at the salute, he read in a loud voice the Proclamation that announced "our liege lord George the Fifth" as King and Emperor.

When he had finished, the enormous crowd burst spontaneously into the strains of the National Anthem, and the guns from St. James's Park began to thunder out the royal salute. Meanwhile, the slender figures of King George's children looked quietly on.

One of my first official memories of the Prince, though I had often previously seen him when he was a lad, during my attendance on his grandparents, was at the funeral of King Edward. Through the sombre London streets, massed with mourners and lined with busby'd Guardsmen at the "Present!", he walked slowly at his father's side.

The slight figure in naval cadet's uniform looked younger than his sixteen years. Behind him marched eight kings. Such a cortège the world has seldom seen, and will never see again. Now some of those kings have been dethroned, others have died, the hand of the assassin has been raised against one or more. The state of Royalty seems to be passing from Europe.

It was, to my regret, not my duty to accompany His Royal Highness to Carnarvon Castle for his Investiture as Prince of Wales. But I was particularly interested in the historic ceremony, and went to some trouble to obtain an account of it, at first hand, from a detective who attended the royal party.

The proverbial luck of the Royal Family regarding weather accompanied the young Prince, and on a perfect summer day Mr. Lloyd George, then Constable of Carnarvon Castle, received Their Majesties in the presence of heralds, druids, and detachments of Welsh troops. In picturesque robes, with an ermine cape over his shoulders, the Prince paid homage to the King, assumed the ancient crown of Wales, and addressed the gathering in Welsh, with a wealth of Welsh idiom and proverb.

It was the first occasion on which a Prince of Wales had used the national tongue, and the crowds who heard him went wild with enthusiasm. My informant told me that they were cheering and singing tirelessly for many hours afterwards.

In October 1912, when he was eighteen years old, the Prince became a freshman at Magdalen College, Oxford. He was accompanied by his tutor, Mr. H. P. Hansell, and an equerry, Major Cadogan of the Hussars. I was detailed to go also, to act as special detective during this period.

Going to a University must necessarily be somewhat of a test for an heir to the throne. At such a place he is subject to the usually rather intolerant and critical judgment of the youth from which, one day, the majority of his statesmen, advisers, and friends will be drawn. It must be difficult indeed for any prince to pass at

Oxford between the Scylla of too-easy friendship and the Charybdis of imagined haughtiness.

Yet before the personality of the young Prince of Wales, Oxford barriers went down like fairy-tale enchantments at the approach of the Prince Charming. It was said of him by a young University wit of the time that "he came, he smiled, he conquered".

There was no aloofness, no hesitation. He lived in college, dined in hall or at the University clubs, and mixed delightedly with his fellow undergraduates, with whom he became enormously popular—a boon companion without whose presence the most excited or the most intimate gathering lacked something. He made numbers of real friends, and those of them who survived the merciless scythe of war are still his friends today.

While at the University, His Royal Highness was a most zealous member of the famous Caledonian Club there, to which honour his Royal Stuart descent entitled him. At one at least of the Club's magnificent celebration dinners he added materially to the gaiety of the proceedings.

The earlier courses had come and gone, and rows of eager figures at the tables awaited, in momentary silence, the grand event of the evening. Suddenly from outside the banqueting hall there arose the wild strains of bagpipes. Next instant, the door was flung wide, and there entered a piper in full dress, with ribbons flying and cheeks distended, playing in a gigantic haggis carried ceremoniously on high for all to see.

The Prince jumped from his chair with a swish of tartans, set his foot on the seat, and began to recite, in a voice that filled the banqueting hall :

"Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great Chieftain o' the puddin' race !
Weel are ye worthy o' a grace
As lang's my airm . . ."

Piper and haggis-bearer fell in with the spirit of the impromptu greeting, and stamped splendidly round the table in time with the beat of the words.

Then the Prince added : "Bobbie Burns never really meant that, boys. *We* know how he'd have greeted a haggis like yon ! Come on : all together ! . . ."

And then he led three of the most thunderous cheers that the Oxford Masonic buildings have ever heard.

I have so many memories of His Royal Highness at Oxford that I must just select a few at random. One of the most exciting of them is a recollection of a certain bleak winter day with a hint of snow in the air and in the low coppery clouds that a bitter wind sent scurrying over the University football ground. But the weather made little difference to the throngs of spectators who waited, muffled to the eyes, to watch the forthcoming game.

A little cheer suddenly started near the pavilion, and spread like an explosion across the ground, as a party of lads came sprinting out, kicking a ball to and fro as they ran. They wore the University colours, and the smallest figure there, racing like a greyhound after the ball, was the Prince of Wales.

I could not help wondering as I watched him whether the heir of any other great empire would have had the pluck to join like this in the hardest winter game played by his subjects, where knocks and strains are plentiful, and the glory goes to the team, never to the individual. Still more did I wonder whether any other

prince would be a good enough footballer to be selected for a team where merit is everything and exalted birth does not count at all.

The opponents came out a moment later—a burly collection of men, more like a Rugby side than a soccer one. They were the redoubtable Oxford City Police XI, and they had a particularly successful record that year.

The captains tossed, the players took their places, and the whistle went for the kick-off. The first Oxford man to touch the ball was actually the little fair-haired royal forward. He dashed between two policemen, intercepted a pass, dribbled out very fast towards one wing, and then sent a swinging pass right across to the opposite side of the field, where it was neatly trapped by the Oxford winger.

That rush was defeated a little short of goal, and after that the game went on with varying fortunes. Half-time came, and the University XI sucked lemons and talked over strategies for the next half, when the whistling wind would be behind them.

The policemen put up a splendid defence against a series of whirlwind attacks that resulted in nothing. Time after time the University forwards swept downfield, only to see the ball cleared far over their heads.

The minutes crept by, and towards the end the Prince hooked the ball from under the feet of an opposing half-back, and raced away with it downfield as fresh as if he had only just started playing. The half-back went after him like the wind, and the police full-backs loomed solidly ahead. One came forward, but a twist of the foot by the Prince sent the leather flying by.

Following it up, His Royal Highness met the other

back in a direct shoulder-to-shoulder charge. The little forward staggered, but the ball had already left his toe in a perfect pass across the centre.

There was a thud as the University centre-forward's boot connected with the ball, and then the whirr as the leather scraped along the net. The sound was instantly drowned by the tumult from the crowd, as cheer after cheer rent the lowering heavens, greeting the winning goal less than five minutes from time.

"Played the little 'un ! Played the little 'un !" they roared again and again, right on to the end of the game.

The first man on the field to bring down a hearty hand of congratulation on the Prince's shoulder was the police back whose tackle had failed to rob the winning side of that well-deserved goal.

A few weeks later I saw the return match on the police ground. His Royal Highness was again playing in the University forward line, but he was a marked man. The policemen wanted no more runs like the last, and a half-back shadowed the Prince wherever he went on the field. The police were obviously determined to wipe out their earlier defeat, and they played an inspired game from the start. Weight and maturity told in the end, and the University lost the game by a narrow margin.

Early in 1913 the Prince of Wales attended a meeting of the 1897 Debating Society, at which the motion under discussion was : "That this House considers that the English detective force is in a parlous condition."

After it was over, the Prince returned by car to his rooms, I following as usual in a taxi. When he arrived, he called me to him.

"I opposed that motion tonight," he said confidentially, and added with his delightful smile: "They

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don't know as much about you chaps as I do, or it wouldn't ever have been mooted !"

"What happened to the motion, sir ?" I asked.

The Prince looked embarrassed. "Oh, that ! It was defeated—serve it right !" he replied. "Good night."

I was told later that the Prince's speech more or less turned the issue, and was brilliantly witty even for him.

In those pre-war days at Oxford, there was a little garage in the town, which had grown up out of a pram-hiring shop, and, even at that time, repaired more push-bikes than cars. Not that pre-war cars did not need repairs—my memory of them is that they were more mysterious and capricious than race-horses.

In this garage the Prince always "stabled" his big Daimler, which, by the way, he usually drove himself, for he was a capable and skilful driver. The royal patronage, and that of the Prince's student associates, brought a lot of notice to the garage, and in time its enterprising young owner began trying his hand in car building as well as car repairing.

He got on extraordinarily well, and soon began to produce the famous Morris motors that now bear his name over half the world. Since then, he has become head of one of the biggest car-manufacturing businesses in existence, and has gained the title of Lord Nuffield for his immense services to the British industry.

When the Prince inspected the Morris motor works some little time ago, I have no doubt that he recalled with amusement those early days when he was an undergraduate and Lord Nuffield used every night to take charge of his long, shiny black car.

In May 1913, on a beautiful sunny morning, I stood watching rather more than a thousand youthful figures

in regulation khaki changing with inconceivable rapidity from chaos to formation. Cavalry, infantry, and artillery, with a jingle and rattle and stamp, slid into orderly masses—and silence.

His Royal Highness, a fair-haired private of eighteen, stood rigidly to attention in the ranks of No. 1 Company of the infantry, rifle well in, head up, eyes square to the front.

The Oxford University O.T.C. were being inspected by General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, and he looked a splendid figure as he moved down the motionless ranks.

In the course of my duties I have met many princes, but I do not think that many—or any—of them have been trained like this, as an ordinary private, open to sharp reprimand if his buttons did not shine or his rifle was not as clean as critical officers demanded. Nor have the others served in the ranks, so as to learn the war game from the common soldier's point of view, though they may have been very interested in the officer's work of moving troops and evolving strategy.

When the review was over, and the Prince was tramping off, rifle in hand, from the parade-ground, I overheard an officer of General Smith-Dorrien's staff say to him: "If this war with Germany ever comes, that Lord Roberts talks so much about, we'll go to it in jolly good company."

That review was a month to the day before the Prince's nineteenth birthday. Almost exactly a year after that, what might be called the first shots of the Great War were fired at Sarajevo, killing two royal persons whose lives would have been saved had the detective service of their country been at all efficient. Instead, the police failure and its results were the signal

for sweeping half the world into carnage, and the Prince of Wales had to get into his khaki again, this time seriously. On August 7th, 1914, he was gazetted second-lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards, and four days later he joined the First Battalion in barracks.

In November he went to France as an *aide-de-camp* to Sir John French, and took up war duties at G.H.Q. For eighteen months he served in various parts of the line, being frequently under fire, and displaying the utmost coolness. Restrained, very much against his own inclination, from taking risks entirely unpermissible to the heir to England's throne, he yet worked as hard and as long as any member of the British Expeditionary Force.

In 1916 he was appointed to the staff of the General Officer Commanding the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, after having spent his twenty-first birthday in khaki and, I believe, more or less in the trenches. After considerable service in Egypt, he went to the Italian Headquarters for a short visit, and then returned to France. I wonder what Queen Victoria would have said to all this—she who once wrote a letter of severe disapproval to King Edward because he had permitted the then Prince George and his brother to go by ship to South Africa while the Boer War was in progress !

On his return to France, the Prince was attached to Lord Cavan's Corps, taking part in the terrible battles of the Somme and Passchendaele. Later, he went with the same corps to the Italian front, after which he returned to France and served with the Canadians till the Armistice was signed.

By this time, though still little more than a boy—he was, in fact, twenty-four years old—he was more experienced in war strategy and practice than most men and

many generals twice his age. He joined the Army of Occupation on the Rhine, and paid a visit to General Pershing, Commander-in-Chief of the American Army, at Coblenz, where he made great friends with the veteran soldier.

One important change was brought about in His Royal Highness's temperament by his experiences in four years of warfare. He who had previously been somewhat studious became an ardent lover of the open air. His sports and interests changed almost entirely to outdoor ones.

Partly because of this, and partly because he was deeply moved by the magnificent loyalty and Empire devotion of the Canadian, Australian, and other overseas troops among whom he had moved, he determined to make a grand tour of the Empire, to meet the men among whom he had spent such times of trial in the various war zones.

In August 1919 he left England on the *Renown*, sailing to Newfoundland and Canada, in which latter country he has a large ranch of his own, which he has often visited since. He is said to be a keen and successful rancher, in which I suppose he takes after his grandfather, King Edward, whose successes with horses and cattle in the prize-ring were innumerable and notable.

During this Canadian visit, the Prince was anxious to visit some of his many American friends, and he journeyed to New York, partly for the pleasure of renewing old acquaintanceships with men he had met at Oxford, in France, and elsewhere. He met the President and, according to his own subsequent account, tremendously enjoyed the visit, and the lavish hospitality and warm friendship that was everywhere offered

him. I have no doubt he captured the heart of America as he does the feelings of every country to which he goes.

Later, he went to New Zealand and Australia, where he was received with outbursts of public enthusiasm that swamped all official efforts to keep them in control. Since then, he has been to India, South Africa, China, South America, and elsewhere, and has gained the title of Britain's unofficial ambassador throughout half the world. This wide experience of Greater Britain and its neighbours has not been undertaken exclusively to promote State affairs. Now and again the Prince has managed to slip in a short holiday for himself; judging by what I know of kings, their only chance to get a little leisure is before they come to the throne!

Whenever His Royal Highness is abroad, the King follows his progress with the greatest interest, and always sends for him immediately on his return, to receive at first hand an account of the tour. In this way, His Majesty keeps extraordinarily well posted with the feelings and concerns of his subjects overseas.

In 1928, when the Prince cut short a hunting trip in South Africa to return in haste to the King's bedside, during the latter's grave illness of that year, I was told that His Majesty asked in a weak voice immediately his son came into his presence: "David, did you get that lion you were so keen to bag?"

The affection between the King and his eldest son has always been deep, and it is certainly a fact that His Majesty began to mend of his illness from the very night the Prince returned.

His Royal Highness never forgets his friends when he is abroad. When in Japan some years ago he saw

a weirdly curly stick—he instantly asked for it, to take home to Sir Harry Lauder, whom he knows well, and who has since used it frequently on the stage in famous character-studies.

The knowledge and experience gained on his tours should stand the Prince in good stead in his official capacity, for he has now become a citizen of the world indeed, having "seen many cities and known the hearts of men". I believe that when he was in the United States it was the dearest hope of many people, on both sides of the Atlantic, that he might fall in love with and obtain royal permission to marry some talented American girl, thus uniting for ever the interests of the two greatest nations in the world. The celebrations that would ensue if such an event ever took place would, I fancy, be something notable in the history of the earth !

On his recent trip to South America, His Royal Highness achieved an enormous and apparently unsought success as an ambassador of British trade to that Continent. To a great extent he put South America on the map for British commerce, and put Britain on the map for American buyers. It is a mark of the Prince's modernity of thought that he realizes that our industries are bound up with those of other great countries, and does not shirk giving the invaluable aid of his presence when British business might benefit thereby.

In the intervals of his public duties and world tours, His Royal Highness found time to look to certain charities in which he took a great interest at home. It is typical of this young man that, for example, he spent part of his twenty-seventh birthday with a thousand East End children who were being entertained by the Fresh Air Fund in Epping Forest.

Immediately overcoming their shyness, he brightened still further what was already something like a day in heaven for the kiddies. He entered into their amusements, presided over their races and games, encouraged and controlled them ; and I shall never forget the rolling advance of tumultuous cheering that accompanied him through the ranks of the children when he finally turned reluctantly homewards. For children cheer like thrushes sing in springtime: as if their hearts would burst if they did not immediately give vent to their feelings.

Now and then the Prince contrives to steal a day's leisure for himself out of the crowded programme which always makes him the hardest worked of King George's subjects. Always, then, he seeks the open air. In winter, until a year or two ago, it used to be his chief delight in life to slip away to Melton Mowbray, where he kept a magnificent stable of hunters. He has always been fond of horses, and his riding to hounds became proverbial for a time after the war, when he went straight and hard over the roughest and most dangerous country, and suffered a number of tumbles.

About one of these an amusing story is told. The Prince had been riding across some rough stubble-fields one misty winter afternoon, temporarily out of touch with the hounds, when his tired mount slipped in crossing a hedge and threw her royal master fairly heavily. The Prince picked himself up, and an American visitor to the hunt, who had come over just behind him, caught his horse and helped the muddy figure to its feet.

The Prince's face was covered with mud-splashes, and the new-comer did not recognize him.

"When I saw your beast go over the hedge, I sure thought for a minute I'd fetched up with the Prince of Wales," remarked the latter conversationally, "because your horse is rather like his. He's *some* rider, that young man ! If he was my son I guess I'd leather him if he took any risks—I mean if he was heir to a throne. But —lawdy !—fancy seeing an heir to a throne covered with mud !"

Then something in the pose of the young man now remounting his hunter arrested the American's attention. He seemed to have a lot of difficulty in clearing his throat of some obstruction.

"Who *are* you, anyways ?" he whispered, after one or two attempts.

"Oh, I'm the Prince of Wales !" laughed His Royal Highness.

As I know from experience, the Prince's sense of humour never deserts him, even under the most trying circumstances. He is a long way the most charming prince with whom I have ever had to deal ; yet that is saying a lot, for some of them, notably Prince Olav of Norway, have been extremely nice to me.

When Prince Edward sold his hunters some little time after I had retired, I could not help feeling for him some small portion of the deep regret he must himself have experienced at parting from those beautiful animals who were so obviously his friends.

When the Prince was twenty-eight, he attended a wonderful ceremony at the Albert Hall, to which I was detailed to accompany him. This was nothing less than his investiture as Senior Grand Warden of the Freemasons' Society.

A magnificent procession entered the Grand Lodge

that summer afternoon, and in it walked numbers of the most famous men in the royalty and nobility of Britain. Escorting the Prince of Wales were the Duke of Connaught, Lord Ampthill, Sir Frederick Halsey, and Lord Birkenhead.

After a long and splendid ceremony, the Prince was formally invested as Senior Grand Warden, and was conducted to his chair of office, and the impressive Masonic salute, according to the ancient custom, was then given by hundreds of Masons to the Grand Master (the Duke of Connaught) and to the new Warden.

Lord Ampthill then unveiled a new painting of the Grand Master. Speeches were made, and Masonic honours conferred on certain of the Brethren. Hymns and the National Anthem were sung, and finally the Lodge was closed with more long and impressive ceremonies. Certainly the dramatic instinct that is so deeply rooted in all humanity is wonderfully provided for by such bodies as the Masons and the Catholic Church, and there is something very satisfying to most of us in such pageantry.

At his investiture, the Prince played out his long part steadily and well, taking the solemn oaths in a firm, quiet voice. He looked very tired after it was all done, as indeed he might well have been.

CHAPTER VII

Tales of the royal children—An example of heredity !—The Duke and the caterpillar—An unsought wooer at Buckingham Palace—Wedding-bells—The Royal *Family*—The King's grandchildren, and some others.

So crowded has been the reign of our present King that it is almost with a shock of surprise that one realizes that he has found time to bring up what is nowadays considered a large family, and implant in them both love of home and devotion to those duties which their position makes necessary.

At one time or another I have seen something of all His Majesty's six children, and have come into close contact with one or two of them. Of the Prince of Wales I have already recounted a few stories. Here, I propose to recount some random memories of his brothers and sister.

During a time when I was in attendance on King Edward, a story went round Court circles in London that His Majesty's grandson, the little Prince George, who was then, I believe, about seven years old, had contrived to stain his face with an indigo dye, much to his own lasting sorrow during its slow removal by scrubbing with soap and a flannel ! Prince George, now the Duke of Kent, was then staying with

his parents at York Cottage, where several of the Queen's children were born.

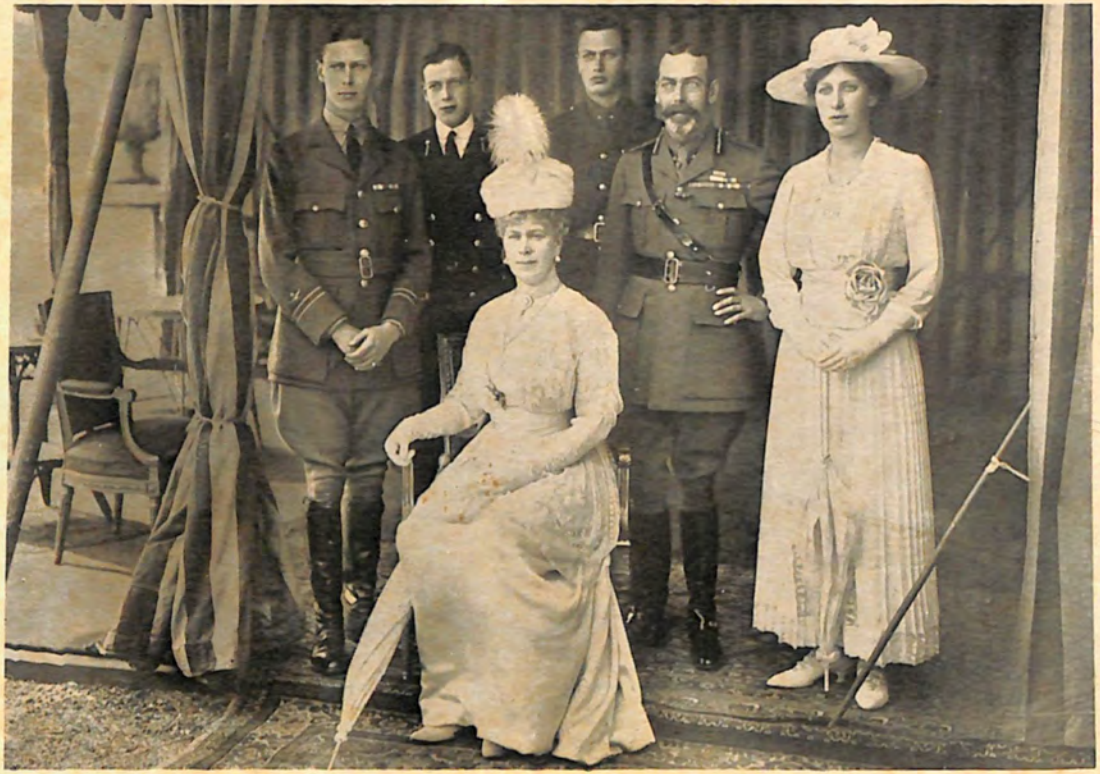
Whether that story of the indigo dye was true or no, I cannot say, but I was reminded at the time of another story, concerning our present King, that certainly had an origin in fact.

When George V was a middy on the *Bacchante*, he and his elder brother decorated each other's noses, following a native fashion, with the yellow pollen of Bermuda lilies, during their stay in that island. A rumour came home that they had had their noses tattooed—and, of course, tattoo is almost impossible to erase !

It seemed that there was a touch of heredity in King George's son when he got himself into trouble with the dye at York Cottage !

It has always been a delightful thing about our British Royal Family that they live human, pleasant lives. Some of our Continental neighbours insist—or used to insist before they got rid of kings altogether !—that Princes of the Blood should be brought up as puppets, having all the joyous childish instincts crushed out of them beneath the weight of the royal purple and gold. Not so in England ! Diarists and commentators have already told so many charming stories about our royal children that I hesitate to add to the number, but I cannot pass on to tales of the Princes' less ingenuous years without telling just one more story that passed for gospel during the time I was acting as special detective to the late King Edward.

One day His Late Majesty was lunching with his son and our present Queen. King Edward, like Queen Victoria, held very strict views about children, and the present Prince of Wales and his brother, who had been



THE ROYAL SILVER WEDDING DAY 1919. THE KING AND THE QUEEN WITH SOME OF THEIR CHILDREN

H.M. KING EDWARD VII AT THE DERBY

allowed to be present at the luncheon, were soon reproved for chattering too much.

There was a period of silence from them while their elders gravely discussed affairs of the day, and then Prince Albert (now Duke of York) began eagerly: "Grandpapa, please have——"

King Edward frowned at him. "I've warned you, my boy," he said severely. "Now don't talk any more till we have finished the meal."

In face of such a command, there was nothing else to be done. But King Edward was very just. After lunch had concluded, His Majesty turned to the little boy.

"Now tell me what you wanted to say," he invited benevolently.

"Oh, it's not much use telling you *now*, Grandpapa!" explained Prince Albert brightly. "I only wanted to say there was a—a—a caterpillar on your salad. But you ate it!"

The King swallowed once or twice, but refrained from comment. The joy of the story, however, is in the sequel. Later in the evening, Prince Albert got his grandfather into a jovial mood, and then confessed that there had not really been a caterpillar at all. He had invented the story, as he innocently admitted, to "get his own back" for being made to keep silent at table.

King Edward brought his brows together in that expression before which statesmen quailed, but he could not keep them there. Quite suddenly he gave way to an explosion of laughter, in which the little Princes joined. I dare say they were very relieved that he had taken it so well.

I think that one of my most interesting pre-war royal memories concerns a certain morning when I was sitting

at New Scotland Yard discussing with another Special Branch detective the trend of crime at that time. I had had a particularly quiet spell for a while previously ; the greatest excitement I had enjoyed had been a few mild brushes with the suffragettes, and I was arguing that the thrill was dying out of police work and that enterprise of the illegal sort was being eliminated from a law-abiding world.

In an idle mood, we made a bet between us whether either of us would be called out on a "big job" within the next month, my friend backing the possibility of excitement and I putting my money on the chance of a quiet life ! The talk drifted off to another subject, but, within five minutes of our shaking hands over the bet, the telephone-bell beside us rang, and I was told that the chief wanted me at once. I knew the modulations of his voice, and I turned to my friend.

"I've lost that bet," I said sadly. And I had.

An amazing story was unfolded to me when I reached my superior's office, and one which, at the time, had obviously to be kept strictly within four walls, though I do not think there can be any harm in disclosing it and its sequel now that some of the principals in these strange events are dead.

A gardener at Buckingham Palace had discovered, that morning, a folded note addressed to one of our Princesses. The man had been working among the shrubberies of the Palace gardens, and had found the note lying on a mown grass walk just inside the high wall that divides the gardens from Grosvenor Place. This walk was a favourite promenade of the Princess in question, where she used to stroll at that time almost every morning before breakfast ; and had the morning when

the note was found not been showery, it is most probable that she herself would have discovered the little note lying there on the grass. As it happened, she did not go out for her usual walk that morning.

Since it was obvious that the originator of the letter was unknown to the Princess, and was trying by clandestine means to attract her attention, the note was opened by the authorities, and was then speedily sent round to Scotland Yard, where I was given the opportunity of examining it, and instructed to arrest the sender.

It was written in the spiky hand-writing that usually denotes the Continental. Phrased with poetry and restraint, and beautifully written, it was obviously the work of a man of birth and breeding. It declared the writer's deathless love and admiration for the royal lady to whom it was addressed, and stated that he would shortly contrive to send a token of his regard, which he entreated the Princess graciously to receive.

This was in the nature of a direct challenge to law and order ; yet the matter needed delicate handling. We obviously could not permit anyone to force unsought attentions on any English lady, much less on a member of the Royal Family.

I examined the letter under a lens, and found that the paper bore an Italian watermark. The letter was not signed, and bore no address or indication of its origin.

My task seemed simple. The writer had announced his intention of sending a further missive. I had only to catch him in the act and the mystery would be over, though the affair could not go through the usual police-court routine.

I was given *carte blanche*, and made careful arrangements. Certain instructions were issued among the

Palace servants, after it had been ascertained that none of them had been acting as accomplice to the unknown Romeo, and detectives were placed at vital points about the Palace environs.

I was confident that the invisible circle was impenetrable; yet three days later another note was found in the Palace gardens, and was brought to my office.

This time it was a love sonnet—original, and a little gem of poetry worthy of Herrick or Philip Sidney. I still have a copy of it among my papers. Once again it was addressed to the Princess, who, of course, was totally ignorant of all these attentions.

I must confess that I was puzzled. I did not see how anyone without an aeroplane could have dropped those letters over the Palace wall. It was just possible that they had been thrown from the top of an omnibus passing along Grosvenor Place, but, if so, the thrower must have been possessed of uncanny skill.

I tightened up the circle drawn about Buckingham Palace and its gardens. The task was no easy one. The grounds cover several acres; and I had at all costs to avoid being officious, or giving any impression that something startling was afoot. Extreme tact was needed so as not to embarrass the dozens of people—statesmen, tradesmen, visitors, servants, and others—who had legitimate business in the place every day.

No one except the police authorities realized that for a week or more England's foremost royal residence was in a state of silent siege. Yet once more the mysterious unknown contrived to elude the cordon of plain-clothes watchers. This time a magnificent diamond ring was brought to my office. A heart-shaped cluster of stones was set about a magnificent diamond that formed the

centre, and I have never seen a more perfect example of the jeweller's art.

The little velvet case that bore the ring was tied to a further love-letter almost pathetic in its sincerity and passion.

Each message, so far, had been discovered in a different part of the Palace grounds ; yet each choice of place showed an uncanny knowledge of the Princess's movements, so that the notes apparently came from some very distinguished person.

After the advent of the ring, I began to lose sleep over the affair ! I took to spending days and nights in the Palace environs, watching for what we almost began to fear might be Mr. H. G. Wells's "invisible man" ! The gardens are over a mile in circumference, but we managed to watch every section of that difficult circle.

Only one gap was left in our defences, and through that gap, in the end, our quarry came. I was posted there, anxious to try conclusions with the strange figure who had so long eluded us.

Lurking in my hiding-place in the stable-yard of the Palace, I saw, one morning, a tall figure walk swiftly up the drive, his eyes searching this way and that among the shrubberies. With a last quick look round, he took something from his pocket and flung it over the wall into the gardens.

At the same moment I stepped out and put my hand on his shoulder. The man must have been something of a boxer : he let out a straight left at my chin which would have saved him further fear of arrest had it connected. I jerked my head sideways, heard his fist whistle by my ear, and came to grips with him. He was lithe, tall, and powerful, and in less than ten seconds we were

in the midst of one of the finest scrimmages that those dignified precincts can ever have witnessed.

To and fro we staggered, feet whirling and scraping on the gravel and breath coming in grunts and gasps. I could have called for help, but I did not want to do that. This man had outwitted us, and had then savagely attacked me when I tried to arrest him. If I must admit the truth, I was not altogether sorry that he had forced me to try conclusions in the good old man-to-man fashion.

He gave nearly as good as he got, but in the end I managed to floor him with a jiu-jitsu throw, and he realized then that further resistance was useless. I contrived to smuggle him away unostentatiously in a taxi to the Yard.

He bore me no grudge for having done my duty, though he was obviously crestfallen at having been outwitted by the police. We had a most interesting talk in the taxi as we drove back. He confessed readily enough that he was a foreigner of exalted birth, which we afterwards found to be the truth. But he would not tell me how he had managed for so long to elude the detective cordon round the Palace environs.

The matter was not one which could be allowed to go through the usual subsequent stages, so the prisoner was interviewed by a certain high official and informed that he must cease from all attempts to communicate with the royal lady he loved, except through the correct and formal channels. His friends were informed, and in the end he left England, giving his word of honour never to return uninvited—a promise which he faithfully kept.

Looking among my post-war memories of the royal

children, the joyous note of wedding-bells from Westminster Abbey seems to dominate the theme.

After the dark business of the war was done, the announcement of Princess Mary's engagement to Viscount Lascelles was greeted in London with enormous enthusiasm. Ever since fairy-tale days there has been nothing like a royal marriage to conjure up romance in the most unlikely places, and, just before the King's only daughter was married, I came across an odd example of it.

The Queen and Princess Mary had gone into the Belgravia district to do some shopping, I think, connected with the purchase of some minor articles of Her Royal Highness's trousseau, and I was detailed to accompany them. As they left the car and entered a selected shop, a surprising thing happened. An old lady was passing on the pavement, and suddenly, from her capacious shopping-bag, there jumped a little black kitten. It seemed to bounce from the pavement like an animated rubber-ball, and immediately set out full speed after Princess Mary, who was just entering the shop.

It took a flying leap on to her shoulder, where it landed as lightly as a feather, and there it sat, purring and delighted, balancing daintily on its tiny black feet. The Princess tried to lift it down, but it refused to be moved. Its real owner, who had recognized the royal party, seemed too embarrassed to call it back, especially as she was outside on the pavement, and would have had to raise her voice to be heard inside the shop.

The little animal seemed so sure of itself and so pleased, that Princess Mary gave up the attempt to dislodge it. There it sat, occasionally being stroked by

the Queen, gently rubbing its soft fur against the Princess's cheek—a living omen of good luck and happiness for the bride-to-be.

I wondered what would happen if it still refused to move when the party returned to the car. But evidently it mistrusted cars ; the moment the Queen entered the vehicle and Princess Mary stooped to follow her, the tiny cat jumped to the pavement and, looking like a wisp of black fur, leapt on to the shoulder of its true owner, who was waiting apprehensively a little way along the street.

She looked so uncomfortable that I said a word or two of consolation to her as the royal car began to move off.

"I do hope the dear Princess wasn't offended or worried by him," she kept murmuring again and again. "You see, sir, he *will* follow me to the market, and I have to pick him up and put him in the bag for safety, and carry him back on my shoulder when the bag's full. When I saw him jump out just then, I didn't know *what* to do, indeed I didn't !"

"What made him choose that special minute to jump out, anyway ?" I asked.

The old lady half closed her eyes and looked uncommonly like my idea of a witch. "He knows !" she asserted in a low voice, more to the kitten than to me—it was still perched on her shoulder. "He knows. Them as he likes, he brings luck to. There's not many he cares for, but them as he likes, he brings luck to !"

She turned to go, but swung round on me to add a few last words.

"I'm gypsy by blood, young man," she said, and I was surprised to see tears shining in her eyes. "Now I

have to live in London. . . . But this kitten's a fortune-teller. I've been married twice. My first nearly beat me to death before he fell in a gravel-pit and drowned himself. My second ran off with a friend of my daughter's. And yet when I read of the Princess's wedding I can't help wishing her luck. I want her to have all the things I dreamed of. And so I came this way this morning to try whether Luigi here would well-wish her or not. He did ; and now she will be happy, as I longed for her to be. And now you know the whole tale."

"How did you know the Princess would come here today?" I asked, for I had not known it myself till immediately before the royal party started. But the old woman was already hobbling away.

In February 1922 Princess Mary was married at the Abbey, with the glorious organ thundering out the wedding-march. She and her soldier-husband made a splendid couple, and the principal bridesmaid, Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, followed the best traditions of bridesmaids by marrying almost exactly a year later, and becoming Duchess of York and sister-in-law to the new Viscountess Lascelles.

I remember standing near the great gates of Buckingham Palace after Princess Mary's wedding, watching the open royal coach drive up with the newly married pair in it. Coachmen, coach, horses, and riders were instantly smothered with showers of confetti, flung by the Princess's three brothers, while the King stood beside them, delightedly watching, and even the impassive Life Guards riding behind the coach allowed small smiles to creep beneath the steel nose-guards of their plumed helmets.

Princess Pat's romantic marriage to Captain Ramsay

of the Royal Navy took place in 1919, very shortly after the Armistice had been signed. Of that also I have a superstitious memory—curious how very much superstition and weddings seem to run together !

I was standing by the great doors of Westminster Abbey as Captain Ramsay and his bride emerged, amid thunderous cheering, when I saw a burly man near by slip his hand into his overcoat pocket, and withdraw it again, holding something as if about to throw. I gripped his arm, but he opened his hand and grinned cheerfully at me.

Crushed in the palm lay a four-leafed clover—the only one I have ever seen. I let him throw it in the path of the smiling bride.

"Sure that's fine of ye, Inspector dear," he said in a rich Irish brogue. "Sure, I'm a Connaught man meself, so I am, an' me old mother in Kilkelly sent me this, to bring luck to the colleen dear on her weddin' mornin'. She's a witch, is me mother ; indade, they're both witches, acushla, for look at the blue eyes of her, and her the daughter of our own Duke of Connaught. And she'll be lucky ! She's married where she loves, which they don't all do, more's the pity !"

A fresh burst of cheering broke out, and he joined it with a tremendous gusto. I moved away from him in the crowd, and have never seen him since, but I believe his prophecy has come true to the letter.

One of the things which has most impressed itself on me, in my service as special detective to British royal persons, has been the evidence of real family affection between the various members of His Majesty's family. I have mentioned before the King's pride in his eldest son. He shows an equally close regard for all his children,

and he is extraordinarily popular with his increasing bevy of grandchildren.

To Princess Mary's sons, he is a revered and favourite grandfather, and the little Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret Rose have spent a good deal of their young lives in the King's company. After His Majesty's illness of a year or two ago, Princess Elizabeth was taken to Bognor Regis to cheer the King during his convalescence, and he often plays hide-and-seek with her and her little sister in the grounds or rooms of Buckingham Palace.

An amusing story is told of a visit to the Royal Tournament at Olympia, when the King and Queen took Princess Elizabeth with them. She watched the moving uniforms with entranced delight for a long while, until presently a tableau was presented of the Battle of Waterloo. The scene shown was the top of Waterloo Hill, with British troops under merciless fire from the French, and Napoleon's famous Old Guard moving slowly uphill to try to storm the crest. At that moment, the Duke of Wellington rode up, waved his sword and shouted : "Up, lads, and at 'em !"

The British troops poured down the hill, there was a crash, and the bearskins of the Old Guard began to go back. The victory of Waterloo was won.

"*Who* is that funny old man with the beaky nose, Grandpapa ?" asked Princess Elizabeth, showing obvious signs of disapproval.

The King smiled. "That's the Iron Duke—the Duke of Wellington, you know," he replied. "You mustn't call him a funny old man. He was a very great general, and a fine gentleman."

"*I* know !" was the unexpected reply. "He made all those battles in the Peninsula War, and I can't ever

remember the names of them. Well, he *is* ugly, anyhow !"

I cannot close my account of the living members of our own Royal family without some reference to the Duke of Connaught.

Of the various occasions when I have been detailed to act as his detective guard at public ceremonies, the most interesting that I can recall took place at the Albert Hall early in 1919, when a grand Masonic peace celebration was held, and the Duke attended in his capacity of Grand Master.

One of the most magnificent processions I have ever seen entered the Grand Lodge, and the Duke's arrival was then announced. There followed simple and moving thanksgivings for the successful conclusion of the war and the victories of His Majesty's troops. His Royal Highness, who is one of the most striking figures that our Army possesses, led the ceremonies, and one could feel the immense building throb like a human heart with the thankfulness of its crowding occupants that the struggle of the trenches had ended at last and that peace had come back to the world again.

The Duke, who even then was getting on in years, bore himself splendidly throughout the long proceedings, and looked as erect and alert at the end as at the beginning. Indeed, he looks no older to this day, and still performs a number of public ceremonies that might be expected to tire a much younger man.

CHAPTER VIII

Edward of England—With the King at Sandringham—Leading the harvest home—When His Majesty won the Derby—"Good old Teddy!"—When the King was lost—Theatre interests—Sipido's murder attempt—The King's friend turns traitor—The King's last journey.

EDWARD VII of England will always hold prior place in my affections among all the kings I have known. To me, he seemed a model of all that was kingly. Urbane, commanding, wise, and courageous, he won increasing respect and admiration from all those who came into intimate contact with him. It has been said that no man is a hero to his valet, but I think Edward VII must have disproved even that.

His Late Majesty was the first royal person with whom I came into close contact. Earlier in my detective career I had been detailed for such tasks as guarding routes along which kings and queens were to pass, ensuring that no anarchist interference took place at public ceremonies, and so on. But now I was to meet the greatest monarch of his time face to face.

I was on duty at the time at Appleton House, King's Lynn, where I was in charge of the safety of the Queen of Norway. On the morning in question, I was standing at the gates of this beautiful country residence, when I

saw a short, burly figure come striding down the drive towards me. It was the King.

As he came up to me, he stopped, glanced at me from his twinkling, deep-set eyes, and said quietly: "What are you doing here?"

"I am on duty looking after your Majesty's daughter, sir," I replied, with some slight embarrassment.

"Oh, are you," responded the King, smiling. "Well, I'm walking back to the Hall. You'd better come along with me, and then we'll both have someone to talk to."

Something in the way he said the words put me instantly at my ease, and I realized immediately that he had commanded me to accompany him just because he realized that the walk would lighten the tedium of my day's watch.

As we walked, the King asked my name, and put all sorts of questions to me about my job and my past career. He had an insight into police work that startled me—I had no idea that kings troubled their heads about these things. He wanted to know all sorts of details about the inside affairs of anarchism and suffragettism in England, asked me what I thought the suffragettes really wanted, and why the communist faction was so discontented. Before we had gone two hundred yards, I had forgotten all uneasiness, and was giving my views enthusiastically and without restraint.

The King stopped me now and then with a shrewd comment or a probing question. We tramped on through the leafy lanes, and as we walked I got a new conception of this man who ruled half the world. Behind the autocratic eye was a mind ever seeking for his people's real feelings, always wanting to know their saner

grievances, and trying steadily to help them in their troubles and increase their happiness and prosperity.

When we got back to Sandringham Hall, the King turned to me. "Yours is a tiring job, Mr. Fitch," he said. "Perhaps as tiring as being a king. Well, anyway, you can go round to the wine butler, now you're here, and get something to refresh yourself. You go round that shrubbery there, and across the main drive. . . . But, damn it, no need to tell a policeman the way. *I dare say you've been there before!*"

One of the happiest memories I have of King Edward at Sandringham occurred very shortly after this. The King had gone out one evening to watch some of his own corn harvested, and he made a right royal figure, standing there among the golden stubble, with the sinking sun sending long shadows far across the field. The first of the great wains came rumbling behind its patient horses into the field gate, and the harvesters started collecting the bearded sheaves and piling them, amid gargantuan laughter, high on the wagon floor.

When the first wain was fully loaded, a small girl—I think she would have been about three years old—suddenly ran up to the King.

"Please, His Majesty," she lisped, "Dadda says you ought to lead in the first cart, 'cos of bringing us luck."

The King put a hand to his beard to hide a smile. The child was one of the harvester's infants, and I saw her father, standing a few yards away, rubbing his hands in an agony of apprehension at this entirely unlooked-for repetition of his remark.

Next minute King Edward had lifted the little maid in his arms and placed her on the shaft of the loaded wagon. Then he went to the horse's head, rubbed its

nose affectionately, and led it as far as the gate to the lane.

"Please, thank you, His Majesty," the small girl called, smiling down at him and almost bursting with pride at having had a ride on a cart whose horse was led by the King. "'Twill bring us the royal luck, for sure."

Curiously enough, the harvest in Norfolk that year was one of the heaviest ever known.

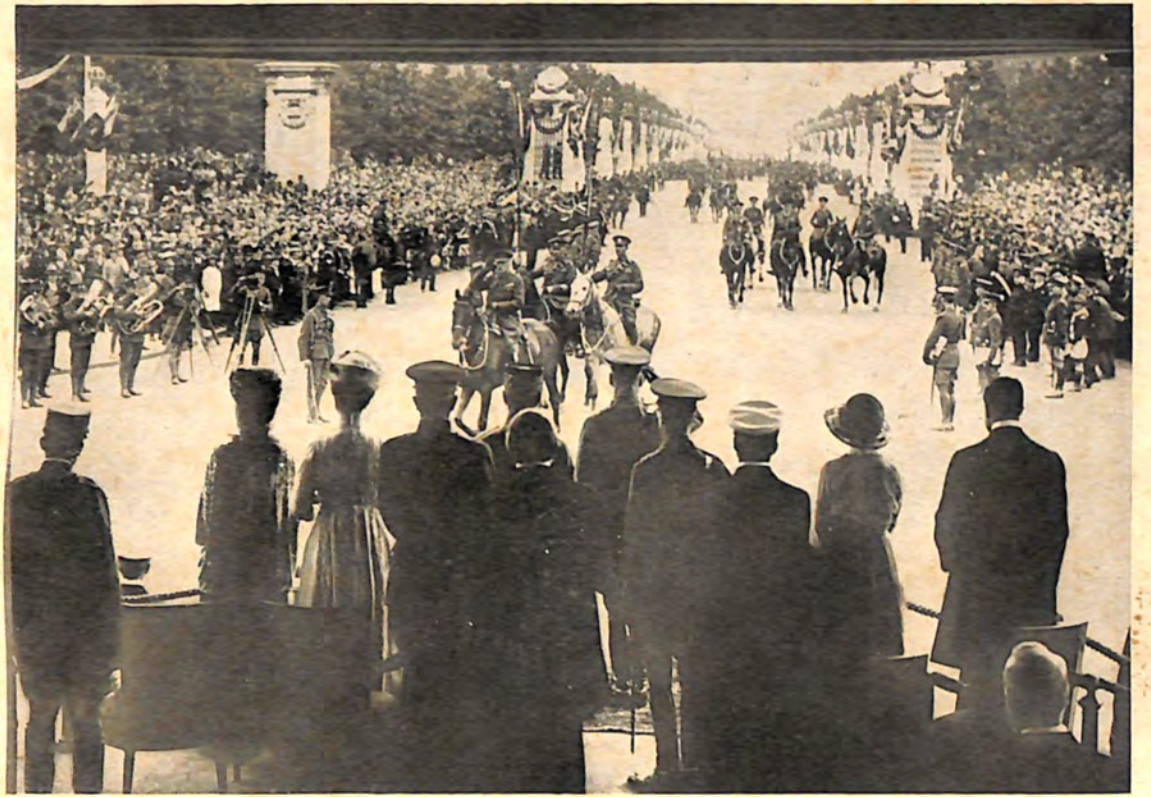
The King was immensely popular among all his tenants in Norfolk and elsewhere, as can well be understood. I remember an occasion at Sandringham when the King took one of his favourite long walks, and I followed some distance behind, for His Majesty hated being "shadowed".

He must have been a couple of miles from home when an open field gate giving on a footpath tempted him to leave the road. He hesitated a moment, than tramped away across the field. I walked in his wake, a long way behind, almost out of sight.

When I reached the other side of the field, the King had stopped to talk to a farmer in rough jacket and breeches. I could hear the conversation, and it amused me, because obviously the farmer thought that the King would have only a superficial knowledge of the intricacies of farming, and he tried at first to keep to matters which a layman might easily understand.

Soon, however, His Majesty touched one of the deeper enthusiasms of the man to whom he was talking —it was a trick he had, as I had noticed in my own conversations with him. The farmer forgot reserve and plunged into technicalities which went far beyond my depth. I could see, however, that the King was speaking

CASE OF REX *v.* SIR JOSEPH JONAS, KT. INSPECTOR HERBERT FITCH AND SERGEANT VICTOR AUGER, C.I.D. SPECIAL BRANCH, AND SIR JOSEPH JONAS UNDER ARREST



THE RETURN OF THE VICTORS : FIELD MARSHAL EARL HAIG SALUTING THE KING IN THE VICTORY MARCH 1919

as one artist to another. The discussions waxed more eager and more (to me) mysterious, and it was obvious that the farmer himself was gladly picking up a wrinkle or two.

At the end of the talk the farmer pursed his lips, drew in his whiskered cheeks, and then burst out, as if he simply *had* to say it: "Well, excuse me for bein' so bold, sir, but I never would ha' dreamed that a king could be such a mortal good farmer!"

I have very many happy memories of the late King, but paramount above them all stands the recollection of a certain glorious day on Epsom Downs. Imagine the scene! The place packed with one of the most fashionable crowds I have ever seen, the weather perfect, the onlookers gayer than they have ever been since the war, celebrities everywhere, the King's horse looking in perfect condition, and very strongly fancied to win. His Majesty himself looked wonderfully brown and well.

A day or two before the classic race was run, I had had occasion to travel with the King to another function, and he asked me what I thought would win the Derby. I mentioned a horse which was then leading the betting, but added that we all hoped that the royal entry, Minoru, would beat him.

The King smiled in his beard in a way he had. "You might do worse than put a fiver on him," he said. "He's doing very nicely at gallops."

Edward VII was exceptionally fond of racing, and knew more about horses than any other Royalty with whom I have come in contact. I was therefore very delighted to get a "tip" from such a source, and I arranged to have rather more than the specified fiver

on the King's horse when Derby day came round. The odds were, I believe, seven to two.

Standing near the King, I watched the horses led over to the start, and saw a perfect commencement to the race. Minoru got away nicely and kept fairly well up; but the pace was hot, and it looked to me, when the animals thundered out of sight behind the gorse at the first turn, as if we were to be disappointed after all.

Then, coming round Tattenham Corner, the gallant horse stretched out, and began to pass one after another of its rivals, till at last it ran confidently into the lead. I cannot picture to you the wild excitement of all those who stood within sight of the person of the King.

He himself was steadily watching his horse through his field-glasses. I heard him say: "That's it! That's it! Well done, Jones—that's just where I told you to go ahead. Now run—run. . . . Oh, Minoru, well done!"

And then Epsom Downs went mad. As the lovely horse came flashing past the finishing-post, the solid ground trembled with the clamour. Wildest and most deafening were the continual roars that went up round the place where we stood. The whole world seemed to be shouting: "Good old Teddy! Good old Teddy! Minoru! Good old Teddy!"

Hats and caps made a sort of coloured snowstorm as they were tossed into the air, forests of arms waved, and then, as Herbert Jones pulled Minoru to a stop and the thundering hoofbeats of the following horses drummed out a royal accompaniment, someone near us began to sing: "God Save our gracious King . . ."

There was a great audible *swish* as, like a vast black wave, thousands of "toppers" came sweeping off. And then the whole crowd was singing—masses and masses

of swaying people, as far as the eye could reach: brass-throated bookies, jockeys on steaming horses' backs, society women in lovely frocks, police, backers, losers, everyone.

Centre of it all, the King stood stiffly in his place, blinking back actual tears of emotion at that incredible, spontaneous, intoxicating congratulation from the joyous heart of his worshipping people.

I tried as usual to keep close to him when he went down to lead Minoru in, but for once it was quite impossible. And, for once, it was not neccessary. Every man in those teeming thousands was a King's Guard that day. It was indeed a scene such as no other country has ever shown and no other Royalty has ever been accorded.

I felt that, under the circumstances, I could be spared to go along and collect the nice little pocketful of pre-war gold that His Majesty's tip had brought me.

That was the third time he had won the Derby, and the only occasion on which the classic has been won by a horse belonging to a reigning sovereign. It was a day never to forget.

King Edward was interested in all forms of sport, and was also a great patron of the theatre. Many a famous name in theatreland today owes its first step towards fame to His Late Majesty's interest, encouragement, and advice. I have a memory of one visit of his to the Royal Court Theatre, in Sloane Square, which gave us a good deal of excitement and worry before it was over.

It took place at a time when the suffragette outrages were approaching their climax. There had been attempts at burning public buildings, and all sorts of other violent demonstrations. Once or twice Their Majesties had been annoyed by aggrieved women.

Also there had just previously been several attempts

at anarchist outrages. The English Princess Ena, on her wedding-day in Spain, had been attacked with bombs, and the blood of her murdered escort and of the horses pulling her coach had been spattered over her wedding-dress. I myself had recently headed Lenin and Trotsky, then almost unknown, out of London, after they had held violent revolutionary meetings, which I had attended in disguise.

On this particular evening every possible precaution was taken for the King's safety, and affairs ran smoothly till the play was almost ended. Then, without warning, there was an explosion, and the whole theatre was plunged in darkness, in which could be heard the shouts screams, scufflings, and stampings of a rapidly growing panic.

Everyone was afraid that an attempt had been made on the King. I stumbled through the blackness in the vicinity of the Royal Box, and there became a witness of a true example of His Majesty's character.

Someone had found an electric torch, and the King was standing up, in the very front of his box, with the light directed full on his bearded face. Like everyone else in the theatre, he supposed at that moment that an attempt was being made, or had been made, on his person ; yet he stood there focused in the light of the torch—a perfect target.

He cared nothing for himself, but he realized that he, and he alone, could still the panic, stop the deadly rush for the exits, prevent loss of life among his subjects. By his imperturbable demeanour, standing there in the one beam of light in that black theatre, he quieted the spreading fear as if he were a gorgon who had turned the rest of the audience into stone.

At that moment Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson ran on to the stage, a lighted lamp in his hand, and still wearing his costume and greasepaint.

"Keep your seats!" he shouted. "Nothing serious has happened. It is just a temporary breakdown in the lighting arrangements. Everything will be all right again in a couple of minutes, and the play will resume."

To be candid, I thought—and so did a good many other people present—that this explanation was merely the invention of an actor's quick wit to prevent alarm; but it subsequently proved to be quite true. Some of the lights went up scarcely a minute later, and we began to get an idea of what had happened.

Meanwhile, the man who had stilled that sudden throb of fear in the masses below had disappeared. I had withdrawn from the vicinity of the Royal Box, and the first I heard of the new development was when one of His Majesty's gentlemen-in-waiting bounced against me and asked me where the King was.

It would not have done to let his absence be generally known, so we began a frantic search on our own. It was I who found him. Racing along unlighted, twisting corridors behind the stage, I came face to face with His Majesty.

"I suppose you're looking for me?" he inquired resignedly. "You fellows don't leave me very long alone. I've just been under the stage to see them repairing the breakdown to the lighting. It's almost done, so we can go back now."

And, indeed, when the King returned to his box, the full lights were up once more, and tremendous applause greeted him, so that the recommencement of the play was held up for fully two minutes by it.

A theatrical visit which went off much more smoothly was that of the great gala performance at the Opera House in 1908, given at the King's command in honour of the then President of France, who was visiting England at the time. I was appointed as one of King Edward's guard on that occasion, and, as the two rulers entered the Royal Box together, the orchestra crashed into the "Marseillaise", the National Anthem immediately following it. I think that is the only time on record when "God Save the King" has taken second place to another melody after the arrival of the King at the theatre.

A wonderful collection of talent was appearing that night. Count John McCormack, Mme Tettrazini, Dame Nellie Melba, Miss Edna Thornton, Marcoux and Zenatello were all in the programme together. I have never heard such singing, and probably shall never do so again.

King Edward was the greatest patron the British theatre has ever had, and the signs of his support were the firmament of stage stars that lighted the splendid Edwardian era. At that time the British theatre led the world.

His Late Majesty often used to say that the theatre was the one place in the world where he could lay aside State considerations and thoroughly enjoy himself. On one occasion, a certain famous person attempted to presume on this absence of formality. He suffered for his temerity.

The King happened to be chatting to a great and celebrated artiste whose work he had encouraged and helped, when a certain stage-manager, very well known but not so widely admired, strolled up.

"The show went off splendidly tonight, Your

Majesty, don't you think?" he remarked to the King, in a tone which was quite inexcusable. In any case, he had never been presented.

His Majesty turned quietly round. "I don't think I spoke to you," he said, in a perfectly courteous voice.

The interloper muttered some sort of an apology, and vanished more quickly than he had appeared.

In his support of the theatre, the King was by no means always content with distant applause. If an artiste gave an exceptional performance, His Majesty always sent for him or her, and the lucky performer was presented in the Royal Box. In this way, King Edward made a great number of personal friends.

Often, too, he commanded such players to give a performance at Sandringham. I remember one such occasion when Bransby Williams appeared in the famous White Ballroom there, and presented some of his wonderful Dickens impersonations.

A proper stage was fitted up, with curtains, full lighting, and appropriate scenery. The King especially interested himself in the lighting arrangements, for he was himself an enthusiastic amateur electrician. When Mr. Williams walked on the stage at last, in addition to Their Majesties, the Prince and Princess of Wales (our present rulers), one or two of their children, and at least one visiting Royalty were present—altogether, an audience of such distinction as might well have given the lucky actor stage-fright.

To make things worse, King Edward spoke for a moment to Queen Alexandra, and then said: "We would very much like you to alter your make-up for the various impersonations while *facing* us, Mr. Williams.

The Queen and I wish to see just *how* you make all these wonderful transformations."

For a moment the actor hesitated. He realized that some of the effect must necessarily be lost if his royal audience watched him changing his wigs and altering his face. However, he bowed assent, and began some of the most amazing quick-change effects it is possible to describe.

Thin, pleading, pathetic Oliver Twist was altered in a couple of minutes to bombastic, *embonpoint* Mr. Bumble. The cringing, oily, 'umble Uriah Heep changed miraculously into the careless Micawber jauntily tapping his battered "topper"; the immortal Pickwick became glowering, maddened Dombey.

When the performance had ended, amid enthusiastic clapping, little Prince George (now Duke of Kent) touched King Edward's arm.

"Who *was* that gempleman, please, Grandfather?" he inquired, in an awed voice.

Apparently the many changes had resulted in a case of lost identity as far as the little Prince was concerned!

Afterwards, when he had rested, the actor was told that the King wished to speak with him. He had had a very exhausting performance, and, hardly realizing what he did, he followed his guide along the carpeted Palace corridors still carrying in his fingers the cigarette he had been smoking when he was summoned. As he entered the King's room, he suddenly remembered it, but could not then dispose of it, so he hastily put it behind his back.

The King said nothing about the cigarette, but thanked Mr. Williams for his splendid performance, and

asked him a few questions about his career. Finally, he dismissed the actor without giving him the jewelled scarf-pin he held in his hand, and which was at that time the usual royal token of appreciation for such a performance in the Palace.

Mr. Williams naturally supposed that the King was annoyed about the cigarette, and it was a sadly grieved man who left Sandringham that night. But imagine his joy when three days later a King's messenger brought him a beautiful silver cigarette-box and match-box, bearing the royal monogram in diamonds and sapphires —and the scarf-pin as well ! It was His Majesty's way of indicating that he had seen the hidden cigarette.

The King was always a man of quick and generous impulses, and I recall another example of the same characteristic that brought a moment of glory to a life that was already darkening towards a shadowy end. It happened at Cowes one regatta week, and the place was in its full gaiety.

One day a half-blind old man, standing on shore peering rapturously at the lovely white shape of *Britannia*, the royal yacht, felt a touch on his shoulder. He spun round, recognized King Edward, and drew himself up in a proud salute.

"You've been a Navy man," exclaimed the King, "or you wouldn't salute as smartly as that."

The old fellow was tremendously flattered at the compliment, and ran off the names of ships in which he had served. After a few minutes' chat, His Majesty turned to me.

"This is one of the Queen's men," he smiled, referring to the fact that the old seaman had served his country under sail in the earlier years of Queen Victoria's reign.

"I'm sure he'd like to look at *Britannia* from closer quarters. See to it, if you please."

I cannot describe how the old chap's face lighted up. "Thank you, Your Majesty. Thank you, sir!" he stammered.

A day or two later, when I had been able to make the necessary arrangements, he was received in one of *Britannia's* spotless dinghies, rowed over the rippling, sunlit water, taken aboard, made much of by the crew, shown over the lovely vessel from stem to stern, given a little celebration tea while the men listened in admiration to his yarns about Queen Victoria's warships of sail and steam, and finally put ashore with glowing memories which must have warmed his heart for many a day.

Despite his imperial manner, the late King could make himself extraordinarily charming, and he was, in addition, one of the most approachable monarchs who have ever reigned over a great Empire.

Once, when he was driving out from Buckingham Palace gates on his way to open a Parliament, a wizened little man who had been waiting patiently in the crowd for over two hours jumped forward through the police cordon and ran towards the State coach, at the same time drawing back his right hand as if to throw something at the King. Before he could do so, I had ducked through the crowd after him and had my arms tightly round him.

The thing he had drawn from his pocket, however, was nothing more dangerous than a folded parchment. I was removing the man when the royal coach came to a standstill, and a footman dispatched by His Majesty came to ask the cause of the disturbance. I explained what had happened, and the message was taken back to King Edward. A moment later the coach was rolling

on its way, and my prisoner was being taken to the police-station.

Shortly after his arrival there, however, a message came from the Palace that the King wished to see the petition—for such it was that the old man had tried to throw into the coach. He was a respectable Jewish shopkeeper, and when he heard the news his eyes filled with tears.

"Then I shall get what I wanted ?" he kept repeating wonderingly. "The King he will read it ?"

As a matter of fact, not only did King Edward read the parchment but he gave it full consideration, and something was done as a result to assist a number of East End Jews, who had so pathetically believed that if only the King could learn of their plight things would be better for them. His Late Majesty, as is well known, was very tolerant towards Jews.

When we released the old man who had tried to present the paper, he took me confidentially by the sleeve.

"I was wrong to stop the coach like that," he said. "I am not used to this country. I am from Hamburg. There, the only way to present a petition is to throw it into the Emperor's coach."

I suggested that he would have found it just as hard to attract the Emperor William's notice as King Edward's, and he stared at me wonderingly.

"I should have been nearly clubbed to death," he confessed calmly. "I took my chance of that here. In any other country my petition would probably have been torn up as well. It is no wonder that you love your King, since he listens to the requests of his people."

The last two years of King Edward's life were

darkened by political squabbles which even his firm hand could not entirely hold in check. I remember, for instance, a great Liberal demonstration at the Albert Hall, which I was detailed to attend. Mr. Asquith, then Prime Minister, was the guest of the evening, and he gave voice to sentiments about the peerage and other things which would certainly have shocked Lord Oxford had they been recalled to him in later years. There were constant terrific disturbances, and the Liberal singing of the now Labour song "God Gave the Land to the People", was very moving.

I remember, shortly before King Edward's death, when I was in attendance on him at Sandringham, noting with surprise the regularity with which telegrams, dispatches, and Government papers and messengers were arriving. A parliamentary crisis was approaching, and overwork in this connection was said at the time to have hastened the King's end.

One evening, after what I suppose had been a particularly hard day, the King came out of the gates for one of those strolls which he loved to take, unaccompanied save by his famous white fox-terrier. His Majesty loved this little dog and made a great pet of him, taking him abroad, and never failing to see him at least once a day, to give him a friendly pat, and often a piece of sugar.

Seeing me near the gates, the King told me to accompany him. His unflagging geniality and thoughtfulness towards all about him never diminished; he could spare a thought for me that day, though he looked tired and ill.

"Sometimes I wish I were the dog, and he were King," he said with a sigh, as we walked. "He has a

wonderful time, whereas I have to think and plan every moment of my day."

He asked me what I had been doing lately in my job, and discovered that I had been employed in anti-anarchist work, and had encountered Maxim Gorky, Lenin, and Trotsky, in London.

"You keep these gentry very quiet in England," he said at last. "When I was in Brussels, you know, years ago, a crazy boy called Sipido fired a revolver into my carriage, nearly grazing my hat. Now, that could never have happened in England."

I have always remembered that quiet compliment to the Force in which I served.

I suppose it is the unhappy lot of kings to have more enemies and more faithless friends than most men have. It was my duty, some years after King Edward's death, to arrest, on a charge of "collecting information with intent to convey it to the enemy", a man to whom Edward VII had shown considerable friendship and kindness. This man was Sir Joseph Jonas, former Lord Mayor of Sheffield, head of a huge munitions firm that was then supplying all the Army bayonets and other things, and apparently the last person in the world who would strike a traitor's blow at the country that had befriended him.

In the early months of 1918, when England was passing through one of the blackest periods of the war, I had to arrest this man and bring him to trial. He was found guilty, and King Edward's son degraded him from his knighthood and denaturalized him ; he was, indeed, fortunate to escape as lightly as he did, after so grossly betraying the trust the late King had placed in him.

I well remember King Edward's last days of illness —the hush at the Palace, the ill-omened passing to and fro of great doctors, and the gloom that seemed to have darkened and quietened all London. I remember, too, how the King's horse, Witch, ran at Kempton, despite the rumours that its great owner's illness would cause it to be scratched, and how it won the 4.15 almost on the last day of King Edward's life. The anxious cheering that greeted the victory showed how beloved the suffering King was, and how pathetically and eagerly the crowds welcomed what they took to be a happy omen.

It was typical of the late King that, although he was dying at the time, he expressed keen pleasure in his horse's success.

King Edward had one superstition—he disliked Fridays, and would never allow his mattress to be turned on that day. On the day he died, which was a Friday, the doctors decided to have his mattress turned to ease his pain. He never knew how strangely his superstition had been overcome at the last. He died the same night.

I have acted as special detective to a score or more of royal persons, and have liked most of them. In recent years some have been driven as exiles from their countries, some have been murdered, and some have died quietly. But I do not remember in the case of any of them feeling such a keen sense of personal loss as on that fateful night when an official of Buckingham Palace whispered : "The King is dead."

In the subsequent funeral service at Sandringham, the King's own favourite hymns were sung, and I think that not only the feelings of the distinguished congre-

gation in the Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene but the heart of a grieving nation went out to Queen Alexandra. I watched her as she sat, a little, white-faced figure, alone with her sorrow, while the organ rolled and the blended voices of the choristers seemed to pierce upwards till surely they reached to the gates of a pitying heaven.

CHAPTER IX

A royal lady—Alexandra the well-beloved—"Birmingham-made" —The Queen at Imperial College—The story of a mangle—Danish friends—At a moviecolour show with an Empress of Russia—The return of the victors—Queen Alexandra after the war.

RARELY, indeed, has it fallen to the lot of a foreign Royalty in England to be able to repeat those famous words of Caesar's—"I came, I saw, I conquered." Yet Princess Alexandra of Denmark might justly have made that high claim.

When she became the bride of Edward VII, then Prince of Wales, insular England looked on the alliance doubtfully. But when the future Queen landed in her new country, uncertainty and criticism vanished like mists before the sun. Her good looks and charm endeared her to the whole nation. She was one of the most beautiful women I have known, and one of the most gracious Royalties I have ever served. A Danish poet named her, long before her marriage, "Alexandra the well-beloved", and in that brief sentence he summed up the Queen who subsequently ruled us.

On one of the first occasions in my career when I was called upon to act as special detective to Royalty, I had the privilege of attending King Edward and his Queen to Birmingham, to open the new Birmingham University. They were accompanied by Princess

Victoria, and were met at New Street Station by the Lord Mayor and a guard of honour, while a royal twenty-one gun salute thundered out to welcome them.

The first ceremony in Birmingham was an inspection of about fifty Crimea and Mutiny veterans. As the royal party was passing down this line of proud old men Queen Alexandra suddenly stopped.

"I have seen you before?" she asked one of them.

"I've seen Your Majesty in processions and things, if you please," was the reply, "but I don't see how Your Majesty could have noticed me."

"But I've seen you—in Copenhagen, surely? You —let me see—you saved a girl from drowning there, long ago, when I was just a little Princess, and you were a young man?"

A light of understanding came over the old man's puzzled face. "Why, Your Majesty, that was my young brother!" he exclaimed. "He *did* save a girl in Copenhagen on the eleventh of March 1858. I always remember the date, because we stormed Lucknow that day, Your Majesty, and a hot job it was."

The Queen smiled. "Do you know," she said, "I was only a child then, and that rescue has remained very vividly in my memory. It always seemed to me like a fairy story—it was a very brave rescue. They ought to have married afterwards and made the story complete."

The old soldier looked in astonishment at the Queen. "Why, Your Majesty, that's exactly what they did do—a year later, in 1859. He brought her to England, and their golden wedding is next month!"

I don't know which was more delighted—the Queen or the veteran. Her Majesty called back King Edward, and retold the story to him. Then the two rulers of

England whispered together like a couple of conspiratorial children. A concrete result of their secret planning was a most handsome golden-wedding gift, with a framed portrait of Queen Alexandra, which reached the old couple on their celebration morning, together with a note from the Queen's secretary explaining how delighted Her Majesty was at the romantic ending of the rescue incident she had witnessed so long before in the capital of her own land.

The King and Queen were given a wonderful reception in Birmingham. Cheering crowds lined the route, loyal addresses were read, and a magnificent luncheon was served at the Council House where Mr. Austen Chamberlain, as he then was, met the royal party. A notable point about this luncheon was that the menu was printed in English—an extreme rarity at big banquets, where French is generally used, goodness knows why!

"I like that!" the Queen said to the Lord Mayor, who was seated near her. "That is as it should be. I don't like menus in French except when one is in France. This menu is true Birmingham-made. I always think Birmingham-made is a synonym for the most honest and solid workmanship England can show."

She could not have paid a prettier compliment to the town. I think the drift of her remarks must have become known, for if the cheering was enthusiastic when the royal couple drove to the Council House before luncheon, it was positively thunderous afterwards, when the procession of carriages rolled on its way to the new University buildings. The opening was an enormous success, even for Birmingham, where King Edward and his Queen were already tremendously popular.

On the following day, I again accompanied the King

and Queen to a public ceremony—that of laying the first stone of the new buildings of the Imperial College, South Kensington. It was an extraordinarily brilliant gathering.

Their Majesties and Princess Victoria were preceded in arrival by the then Prince and Princess of Wales (our present Sovereigns), and Viscount Haldane, Sir Julius Werhner, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and other famous peers, ministers, and scholars crowded the place. The weather was wonderful, the stone was "well and truly laid" by King Edward, and the proceedings passed off perfectly and without a hitch.

I was the more glad that there had been no trouble, because the summer of 1909 was an unsettled one from the police point of view. Within a few weeks of this ceremony I had to arrest an Indian student on a charge of murdering Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Hutt Curzon-Wyllie, K.C.I.E., and Dr. Cawas Lalcaca by shooting them on the stairs of the Imperial Institute. The margin between peril and safety is often a very narrow one.

I have mentioned before in this book that detectives who have much to do with Royalty need tact. Sometimes, too, they need quite a lot of general knowledge. Once, as I shall recount later, I was suddenly commissioned by a royal person to go and buy a taxi ! Once, also, during my service in connection with Queen Alexandra, I was sent to buy—a mangle !

Her Majesty's warm kindness towards all needy persons was known from one end of England to the other, and she used to receive every day a number of letters beseeching assistance which would have put the vaunted "fan mail" of most film stars to shame.

Every letter she carefully examined personally. In every case where it was possible she did something to help, though she was most sensitive about having her magnificent charity known. Often the recipients themselves were left totally unaware that it was their own letter to the Queen which eventually brought them, apparently quite indirectly, some much-needed benefit.

On one occasion I ventured respectfully to suggest that a rather notorious old slum woman, whom the Queen had helped already several times, was apparently imposing on her generosity.

"I know I am sometimes imposed on, Mr. Fitch," said Her Majesty gently, "but I would rather it should be so than feel that a genuine case of need went unnoticed."

The affair of the mangle arose from one of these applications for help, but that time it was a genuine case. An old washerwoman in the slums near the Oval had written a queerly worded letter, and addressed it to—"Her Royal Majesty the Queen, Sandringham Castle".

The letter was rather a pitiful one. It said that the writer was a widow, who kept herself alive by taking in washing. But her mangle had broken, and with its loss her livelihood seemed threatened. She had tried hard to get help to buy another, but failed. Now she was faced with the "House", and the grim prospect terrified her almost out of her wits. If only her letter could get to the Queen, she knew things would be all right. "Her Royal Majesty" had such a kind heart!

Such letters are sometimes sent to Royalties by disaffected anarchists for unscrupulous purposes. A Russian prince who answered one in person, just before the war, paid for his generous impulse with his life. So I

was sent to find out the facts of the "mangle case". I found the lodging easily enough, but the old lady was quite overcome when she heard I had been sent by the Queen.

"I never really thought they'd let her trouble her pretty head about the likes o' me," she declared, tears running down her wrinkled cheeks, "but now everything will be all right. God bless her !"

It was all right, too. In place of the old, clumsy machine, I was commissioned to buy a mangle of the very latest and most perfect type. Not knowing much about mangles myself, I passed on the instructions to a suitable shop. When next I went to visit the old lady to see that everything was satisfactory, she walked round the mangle like a saint round a shrine.

"The dear Queen !" she murmured. "God bless her pretty face ! I wonder if she knows what she's saved me from."

I was selected to inquire into several such cases, and in every one of them, sometimes in spite of my own uncertainty of the applicants' real need, aid was given. In one or two examples the necessity was truly acute, and the royal gift made the difference between untold misery and a tiding-over of the period of misfortune.

The kindness for which Queen Alexandra became so universally loved was by no means restricted to her acquaintances and her pensioners. Everyone who ever came in contact with her knew it, as they knew her sunny smile and happy voice.

As one of my own earliest experiences at Sandringham, I was sent a pair of pheasants at Christmas, "With Her Majesty's compliments, to Sergeant Fitch". Yet most Continental Royalties with a new detective

would not even notice the change, and would not care in the least if they happened to do so.

Queen Alexandra, after her accession to the throne as King Edward's consort, did not forget her own Danish friends. At Sandringham and Buckingham Palace she frequently had Danish visitors, and in the earlier years of her married life she and the King used to go to Denmark every year, to visit Her Majesty's parents.

An interesting story is told of a visiting princess—an American who had married a foreign prince—who came to Sandringham just after the "wasp-waist" fashion had attained its height. The visitor, who was something of a leader of dress fashions, had already abandoned "wasp-waists" and had had a new gown made by John Worth of Paris which afterwards set an entirely new fashion raging throughout Europe and the United States.

While in England, she had occasion to have certain slight adjustments made to the gown, and it appears that the shop where the work was done copied the garment, and that a duplicate of it was worn at a subsequent Court. Queen Alexandra was woman enough to be displeased at the incident, and apparently Palace patronage was withdrawn from the offending shop.

Instead, Her Majesty assisted the daughter of a former Copenhagen friend to start as a designer in a shop of her own in London. This designer, Emma Christianssen, succeeded so well that she was soon able to transfer to the rue de la Paix, where the business still continues as one of the most flourishing in the city of fashions.

I remember, in my own experience, an occasion when Queen Alexandra unexpectedly met some of her compatriots in London, and seemed very pleased indeed

THE KING DRIVING THROUGH BRUSSELS IN 1922

H.M. KING OF THE BELGIANS (THEN DUKE OF BRABANT) WITH KING ALBERT (*left*) IN 1922

at the coincidence. It happened in 1912, after King Edward's death.

The Dowager Empress Marie of Russia, Queen Alexandra's sister, was at that time in England on a visit, and the two sisters, accompanied by our present King and Queen, went to the old Scala Theatre in Charlotte Street, to see the first colour-film shown in England. I was appointed to accompany them.

During the early part of the performance a group of people in the stalls seemed rather noisy. The Empress turned suddenly to me.

"Those people are ill-behaved," she said. "Please tell them to go out."

Actually, of course, this was a matter for the theatre authorities. The people concerned had not been at all rowdy, even though they were a little disturbing. It was an embarrassing situation for me, since the Empress of All the Russias was accustomed to absolute submission to her slightest wish, at least in her own country. Queen Alexandra saved me.

"We can't do that, Marie," she whispered. "People in England are very democratic. We shall just have to pretend we are back at Fredensborg again."

Fredensborg was the Danish Palace where the two Princesses had been brought up, and in Denmark the Royal Family is even more democratic than our own.

At the reference to her childhood, the Empress smiled—a thing she rarely did, for she had had much to sadden her. "Those were wonderful days," she sighed.

A tactful whisper to one of the theatre attendants reached the source of the trouble, however, and I was glad to observe that the group quieted down. They had obviously no wish to offend, and had not known that they

were doing so. They were very quiet for the rest of the performance.

During the show, which was something almost in the nature of a miracle in those pre-movie days, a castle was pictured on the screen, and the Empress whispered delightedly : "Why, Alix, that *is* Denmark. It is Solund, surely ?"

At the same time, an enthusiastic burst of clapping came from the party in the stalls.

"I wonder if they are Danes too ?" murmured Queen Alexandra. "I must know. Please go and ask them, Mr. Fitch," she commanded, turning to me.

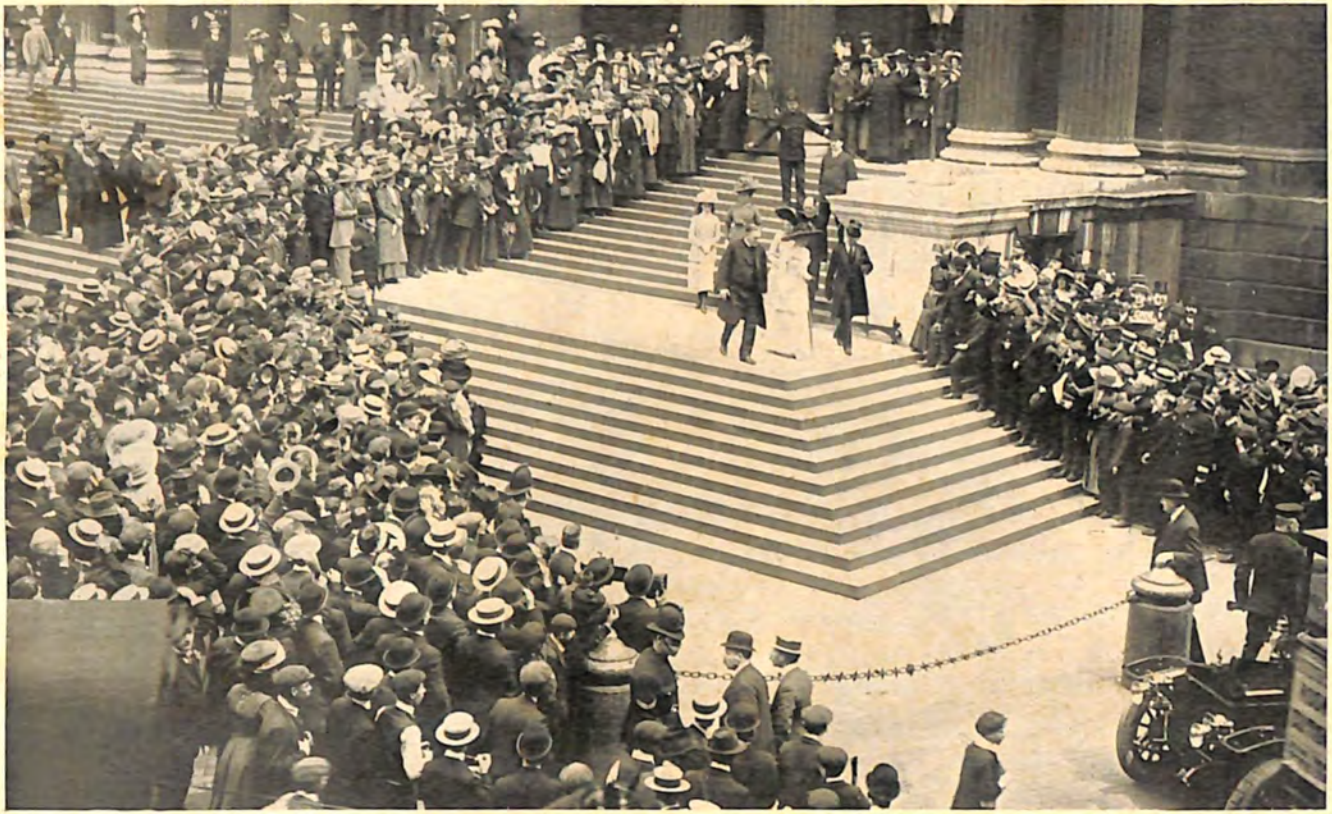
I went down to them, and they proved to be a Danish banking family, the head of which had been known to Her Majesty's father, King Christian of Denmark. She insisted that they should be presented to her, and chatted with them animatedly for some time.

When they had gone, the Empress of Russia turned to me. "I am so glad you did not turn them out after all !" she smiled.

During her stay in England I had several times to accompany her to various ceremonies, and on shopping expeditions in Regent Street and elsewhere. It is interesting that nearly all the foreign royal ladies who visit England seem to make it a great occasion for shopping, and some of them must certainly take back whole trunks full of new clothes bought over here. Being a mere man, I had always supposed that Paris was the great centre for these things ; but Royalties seem to prefer London, and the tendency increases with the passing of the years.

Just before the Empress left Buckingham Palace, I was gratified and surprised to receive a letter from her,

FIELD MARSHAL EARL ROBERTS, FRIEND OF MANY ROYAL PERSONS



H.I.H. PRINCESS VICTORIA LOUISE OF PRUSSIA, OUTSIDE ST. PAUL'S (MR. FITCH IN BACKGROUND)

enclosing a splendid gold watch and chain, the watch being embossed with the Imperial arms of Russia. The letter explained that the presentation was a token of appreciation for my services to Her Majesty during her English visit.

I still have the letter, but the watch and chain were stolen from me some years ago—removed almost under my very eyes. I still remember my utter astonishment when I felt for the watch and realized that it had been deftly removed, and how my utmost efforts failed to expose the thief.

It just shows you that even detective-inspectors are not immune from the attentions of the light-fingered gentry technically known in the criminal world as "slants".

In the pre-war years that followed Edward VII's death, Queen Alexandra exercised a very great influence on our present Royal Family. Long before, in 1881, she had obtained a promise from the then Prince George, now George V, that he would read a chapter of the Bible daily, and he has always since adhered to that promise. In similar ways Her Late Majesty guided the formation of the characters of King George's children, with whom she was a great favourite. Her "babies", as she used to refer to them, have grown up now, and occupy important positions in the State. Much of the work which they do in England and the Empire was inspired by the gentle lady who was their grandmother, and who taught them so patiently and well the "virtues that belong to princes".

During the war, I did not see much of Queen Alexandra, because my spy-catching activities took me out of London a good deal. But I have a memory of her just after the great struggle had finished.

I was in attendance at Marlborough House at the time, on the occasion when the victorious field marshals were to be received officially in London after their return from France, and, through no wish of my own, I became the centre of a good deal of astonishment.

Queen Alexandra and Princess Victoria were strolling in the grounds of Marlborough House, near the main entrance, when Her Royal Highness drew the Queen towards the place where I was standing.

"You remember Mr. Fitch," the Princess said. "He is now looking after Maud and Olaf" (the Queen and Crown Prince of Norway).

Queen Alexandra shook hands with me in her usual gracious manner, and we conversed for a few moments about my war work. After a short chat, she moved away with the Princess.

It was not until then that I realized that a crowd of people who had gathered on the roof of the park-keeper's house near by were putting themselves in imminent peril of falling *en masse* to the ground in trying to get a good view of me.

I expect they wondered who on earth I was ! I fear I must have disappointed them, too, because I am sure I did not look in the least like a victorious field marshal returning in pride from the wars ! When the real men came along, they were much more impressive ; and, indeed, the whole ceremony was a magnificent and memorable one.

Queen Alexandra, during her lonely years at Sandringham after the King's death, had one inseparable companion and friend. It was a little Yorkshire terrier, by name Togo, and on one occasion it caused me an amusing moment.

I had just come on duty at the gates of the Hall when I heard a slight rustle among some bushes in one of the near-by shrubberies. Earlier in the same day I had been warned that a suspicious-looking individual had been seen in Sandringham, apparently an American, and dressed like a dog-fancier or groom, or something of that sort. He had been noticed in the vicinity of the Hall, and there was a vague fear for Togo, because the little terrier was worth a lot of money and, in addition, what a wonderful memento he would have made to an unscrupulous tourist !

I strolled quietly up the drive towards the place where I had heard the bushes rustle. They were quite quiet now, but I noticed some finely chopped liver on the grass edging the drive. As noiselessly as possible, I stepped among the shrubs.

I expected to find a rather "horsy" individual, probably crouching over an open sack into which he hoped to pop the royal pet. Instead, I received a surprise—but not as great as the one I administered !

Wonderfully hidden by the leaves, there stood a tall tripod, with the conventional photographer's black cloth over it. Under the cloth, moving to and fro and blissfully unaware of my approach, was a tall man in an amazing pepper-and-salt suit ; at least, I assumed that from the trousers, which were all I could see.

I gently touched the cloth where the head of my quarry was outlined, and the jump he gave nearly upset the camera, tripod and all. He emerged like a jack-in-the-box, very red in the face. It was a further surprise to me, for I happened to recognize him as a Western United States cattle-king—a man who was very rich

and powerful on the other side of the Atlantic—though I did not know he had come to England.

In a few words, he explained the situation. His business was cattle, but his hobby was collecting photographs of what he described as "blood-stock". It didn't matter whether the "stock" was dogs or horses or cattle or racing pigeons. But he had heard of Togo, decided to get a photograph, been unable to buy one from any photographer he had tried in London, and decided, with typical directness, to get one himself.

I took an instant liking to the big, grey-eyed, straight-spoken man. He could not, however, be allowed to lurk in the bushes of Sandringham Hall, though the offence did not seem serious enough to warrant official police action. I therefore contented myself with telling him of a royal photographer—I think it was Hoppe—who, to my knowledge, had a photograph of Togo, and then I saw the invader and his camera off the premises.

I thought that the incident had finished, but to my surprise I received a letter a few days later, at the Yard, telling me that the much-desired picture had been obtained, and thanking me for my part in the matter, and for preventing the sort of unpleasant publicity which might have resulted from my more or less friendly "arrest" of the intruder at Sandringham Hall.

The letter also contained a most cordial invitation to come and see the writer should I ever be in America, and examine for myself his collection of animal pictures —an offer of which I shall certainly take advantage if I ever have the opportunity.

When, some years ago, the news of Queen Alexandra's death spread over foggy London like a pall, I felt a sense of personal loss, as, I believe, did everyone

who had ever served this gracious lady. If there had been more rulers like her, the contamination of communism which has spread so perilously over Europe in the last few years would have been kept at bay, and affectionate loyalty would have dispelled the red shadows that now threaten the future of the Western world.

CHAPTER X

The friends of kings—A story of K.of K.—"Bobs"—The "Terriers'" early days—The "middy" who became Field Marshal—A Bottomley episode—At Sir Henry Wilson's funeral—A Goodwood story.

A FAMOUS poet once wrote that kings can have no friends. My experience as a royal detective goes to prove exactly the contrary. There are in politics, the Church, the Services, and all departments of national affairs, certain men whose first and only consideration is to serve the nation. They are rare, admittedly; but they are the friends of kings, because to them alone can the kings turn for unprejudiced and fearless advice. It is of some of them that I propose to write in this chapter.

In such a list it is surely fitting that the austere, stern figure of Field Marshal Kitchener of Khartoum should take prior place. I remember him in 1910, when Prince Francis of Teck, chairman of the Middlesex Hospital, together with Field Marshal Grenfell, the Lord Mayor of London, and a host of other celebrities, received the great soldier at the opening of the winter session of the Hospital Medical School.

Kitchener looked preoccupied when he arrived, and his always severe face was almost harsh. He inspected the hospital O.T.C., his eye critical and cold; but its smartness pleased him, and he thawed a little. After-

wards, in a big marquee, an address was given, reports read, and speeches made.

Then came the great event of the gathering. The prizes for the preceding year were presented by Lord Kitchener to the successful students. It appeared to me that there were some avoidable little delays and minor hitches in the arrangements here, and the distinguished prize-giver seemed of the same opinion, for his brows came down and stayed down. He was just as encouraging and courteous to the students, but it certainly began to look as though there was a rebuke coming for someone.

However, things improved towards the end of the procession, and after a few minutes of conversation with the governors and officials of the hospital, Kitchener went out to his car. In such a mood, it was particularly unfortunate that, at a corridor corner, his boots slipped on a bit of tessellated floor, and he almost lost his balance. His big moustache came down in a straighter line over his mouth, and his face was as dark as a thunder cloud. Personally, I kept well behind him.

Then, as he approached his car, a thing happened that dissipated the whole of the oppression. The black, silky-eared head of one of the two spaniels that the great soldier so dearly loved appeared for an instant over the side of the car. A pair of anxious, pathetic brown eyes took a lightning glance at their master—and vanished !

The little dog had so very obviously read the signs of the storm, and Kitchener's icy blue eyes melted as if a sunbeam had glinted on them. And then, within the same second, *another* black head popped up, observed the weather, and disappeared even quicker than its fellow.

The Field Marshal's moustache quivered, and then

he broke into a smile that made his face extraordinarily likable. "Little scoundrels!" he muttered below his breath.

When he stepped into the car, both dogs were apparently fast asleep in a corner ; but, on hearing his friendly farewells, they awoke with an altogether suspicious alacrity and, with the most impudent assurance, pushed each other out of the way in an attempt to monopolize their master's pats.

I have already related how it fell to my lot to arrest an Indian student for the assassination of Sir William Hutt Curzon-Wyllie, in Kensington. Sir William had served under Lord Roberts in India, and "Bobs", who never forgot a brother officer, consented to unveil the memorial afterwards raised to the memory of the murdered man. It was my duty to attend the memorial service at St. Paul's, as guard to Lord Roberts, and to see to it that there was no outrage there, for at that time certain Indian agitators were causing all the trouble they well could.

It was said that Lord Roberts never forgot a face, and we had a wonderful example of his memory that morning. As he passed into the Cathedral, he noticed a man standing in the crowd that had been unable to obtain admission. The Field Marshal turned and whispered to one of his staff-officers, and as a result I was asked to discover who this man was ; I had noticed him myself, because he was pushing forward right into the front of the onlookers.

I took the message to him and, to my astonishment, was told that he had served in the Punjab under John Nicholson, at the time of the Mutiny, and had been a quartermaster-sergeant under Captain Roberts, as he

then was. In the intervening fifty-three years they had not seen one another; yet Lord Roberts recognized him.

On my return to the Field Marshal with this answer, I was told to make arrangements for the man to come into St. Paul's as an extra member attached for the time being to Lord Robert's staff. After the service, the two men talked together for several minutes, recalling old memories. That has always struck me as being the most astounding case of memory that I have ever met, and, as a detective, I have met many. No wonder his men called the Field Marshal "Bobs"! They had cause for affection if he could remember them all like that!

One of the things that was closest to the heart of Lord Roberts was the formation of a proper Territorial force, nominally to safeguard this country from invasion at the hands of a Continental enemy, but really always with the idea that, some day, a war with Germany might create a vital need for a powerful second line of defence behind the men who later earned the name of the "Old Contemptibles".

It was not long since the "Terriers" had been a laughing-stock, and provided *Punch* with endless material for cartoons. By 1910, however, they were forming into the workmanlike force that later was to save England. The Secretary of State for War at the time was Lord Haldane, and he associated himself with the Territorial movement in every possible way.

I was detailed to be present at a Territorial dinner at the Ritz, in the winter of 1910, when Lord Haldane spoke very strongly in support of the National Reserve, as they were then called, and advocated a very considerable increase in their strength.

Two years later, the same statesman was present at a grand review of Territorials in Hyde Park, and once more it was my duty to attend. This time the place was thick with distinguished people, for Parliament had at last recognized the need for a proper Territorial Army, and for giving it adequate training and encouragement.

During most of a midsummer afternoon, battalion after battalion marched into Hyde Park, and tramped solidly to appointed places, till the ground seemed thronged with men in khaki. Just before six o'clock, Field Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., appeared with his staff, and the whole atmosphere was charged with expectation.

And then came the King, accompanied by H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, Sir John French, Colonel Lambton of the Coldstreams, and other officers, and was met by Lord Roberts and staff and officially received by Sir Evelyn Wood. Lord Haldane and Lord Stamfordham accompanied the Queen and Princess Mary.

The King inspected the brigades, and then he and the Queen went to a saluting-point, and company after company marched past, with the mechanical perfection and accurate tramp of "regulars". It was a magnificent sight to see, that brown-faced, keen-eyed multitude pouring by, eyes turned smartly towards the saluting-point, and it was something of a shock to realize that they were not soldiers at all but just clerks and workmen who had taken up arms in their spare time, as a safeguard in case their country should ever be threatened.

Their Majesties were obviously impressed, and Lord Roberts, foreseeing the war which was to begin just as his life ended, chatted eagerly to the King about them. No doubt he was urging, as he always did in those days,

the vital importance of the Territorial cause, and its need for royal approval. The old Marshal must have been a proud man in his latter days, when he saw the splendid machine he had done so much to create moving steadfastly up behind the Regular Army, and facing war conditions as unshaken as the finest troops in the world—as unshaken, in fact, as the pick of the German Army opposing them.

Sir Evelyn Wood, who was the Commandant that day, had had a most interesting career. He fought in the Crimea War, when he was a midshipman attached to the Naval Brigade that suffered so terribly before Sevastopol. Some time later, he changed from the Navy to the Army, won the V.C. in the Mutiny, became one of the most noted cavalry officers of the day, served with distinction in the Ashanti and Kaffir Wars, created the Egyptian Army, served in the South African War, and then took up the greatest interest of his later years—the formation of the Territorial Army. In appearance, he was a singularly gentle and quiet man, and no one would have dreamed that this was one of the most brilliant generals of his age, and the winner of England's premier military decoration for a deed of exceptional and cold-blooded valour.

A few minutes before the King arrived for this review in Hyde Park, Sir Evelyn noticed an orderly struggling with a horse which had become terrified of the growing crowd. The man may have been a good Territorial, but he obviously knew nothing about horses, and he was savagely jerking the bridle in an effort to scare the already frightened beast into submission, with the result that the horse started rearing.

The Field Marshal stepped forward from among

his officers and took the bridle just as it was almost twitched from the orderly's hand.

"Let go !" he commanded.

He drew the horse on to its four feet again and rubbed its nose with a gentle hand, whispering to it meanwhile. It cocked its ears, and within a minute was allowing Sir Evelyn to lead it up and down, while he rubbed its neck soothingly with his gloved hand. When it was quite quiet, he brought it back to the orderly.

The unfortunate man had turned crimson to the tips of his ears on discovering who it was who had taken the horse from him. He stood miserably until it was returned, and then braced himself to receive the rebuke that he really deserved.

"You always have to coax horses—you'll find you can never coerce them," said the General gently. "Never mind ! One has to learn—I had to learn in my day."

And he walked away as if nothing had happened. Yet he had saved what might possibly have been a nasty accident, for a terrified horse can be very dangerous in the midst of a crowd.

To write of horses recalls inevitably to me the many occasions when I have acted as special guard to Their Majesties at various race-meetings, both before and since the war. I remember one in particular, a meeting at Sandown Park in 1920, when Horatio Bottomley, then almost at the summit of his power, made an unsuccessful bid to introduce himself into that charmed circle of the friends of kings.

Bottomley's stables were well represented at that particular meeting, and he had, I recall, no less than four horses entered in one race alone. I saw him several

times as he strolled to and fro talking to his trainer. He looked magnificently assured, as usual, and when his vermilion and black colours were carried to victory in the first race, he evidently felt that the occasion demanded something big.

He strode over to the side of a very famous race-goer and horse-owner of those years, who was, if not a friend of His Majesty, at least a bit nearer to that enviable position than was Horatio himself. He did not appear to be very well received. His *vis-à-vis* spent most of the time ostentatiously watching the racing through his field-glasses, but Bottomley persevered. They were standing only a yard or two from me, and I could not avoid hearing the strident voice of the owner of *John Bull*, whose conversation seemed deliberately centred on the King. His Majesty was present at Sandown that day, as I have said.

At length, after receiving monosyllabic replies to various comments, Bottomley proceeded to relate a most improbable story about one of the horses in the King's stables. The other man listened in silence till it had ended.

"Well, you see," he said finally, in a voice of considerable exasperation, "there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamed of in your philosophy."

The contemptuous tone in which he spoke was in itself an insult, and "Horatio" was not a man who could be touched with impunity.

"The insolence of office, I perceive !" he remarked like a flash, giving one *Hamlet* quotation for another. And with that he walked calmly away. The thrust was rather a neat one, for, at the time, the other man held a

high office to which his talents were perhaps not quite equal.

In the years following the war, the Irish troubles grew to menacing dimensions. The Special Branch of Scotland Yard, to which I was attached, was formed mainly to combat Irish disorders in England in Queen Victoria's reign. Between 1918 and 1932, the Sinn Feiners contrived to make themselves into an intolerable nuisance that neither police nor military measures could entirely subdue.

In the spring of 1921, a quiet-mannered Scottish engineer named McNeil was shot dead in the hall of his little house in a peaceful London suburb, and the four Irish assassins who did the deed got safely away. The same night, there were several other outrages in England.

In June 1922, Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson was shot down by Sinn Fein gunmen on his own doorstep in sedate Eaton Square. That time the assassins were not so lucky ; they were traced by detectives and arrested, despite armed resistance, and finally hanged—the only satisfactory end for such vermin.

Sir Henry's body was conveyed on a gun-carriage through the London streets to St. Paul's, in one of the most impressive cortèges that it has ever been my lot to witness. I was entrusted with arrangements to ensure that no further demonstration took place during this funeral march and the subsequent service, in which numbers of famous men very much hated by the Sinn Fein faction took part.

The whole route was thoroughly combed by detectives, and suspected persons were kept from it. Plain-clothes men and police were placed thickly along the streets through which the procession passed. One or two

persons of doubtful reputation were "moved on" unostentatiously, so that probably even the onlookers within a few yards of them did not know that anything out of the ordinary had occurred. Nor did they guess at certain other precautions. Lord Ypres' car, for instance, was like a tank—even the windows were bullet-proof.

The cortège passed slowly on its way, to the sounds of military bands playing Chopin's funeral march, the cathedral service took its solemn course, and everything passed off as smoothly as could be. But, for all that, we at the Yard had some worried moments till it was all over.

One of the King's Counsellors of whom I retain a rather amusing memory is Sir Edward Shortt, K.C. In 1922, when he was Secretary of State, he had the honour of receiving the King and Queen when they arrived to open the new County Hall, at Westminster Bridge, the future headquarters of the London County Council. I was detailed to be present at this ceremony as detective guard.

Just before midday, when the royal carriage was expected at any moment, Sir Edward took up his position in the main entrance of the Hall, in Belvedere Road. On the west side of this road there was drawn up quite a concourse of schoolchildren, with their teachers in charge, waiting to watch Their Majesties pass.

One of them managed to elude his companions and mentors—I suppose they would not have been schoolchildren had not something of the sort happened—and disappeared. The lady in charge of his detachment was apparently rather excitable ; anyway, I first became aware of a sort of stirring and boiling-up among the children, and then of the lady herself inquiring in agitated tones for "Tommy".

Inquiries ran round the whole waiting mass of children, and youngsters who had probably never heard of that particular "Tommy" in their lives tried to join in the hunt. Infants are easily excitable; and the search began to assume the porportions of a pocket panic.

And then I noticed Sir Edward Shortt look down at a specially innocent-looking boy who stood near him, trying vainly to give the impression of belonging to his party.

"Are you Tommy?" inquired Sir Edward, in his incisive court-room voice.

The lad had meant to deny it, seeing no reason to abandon his splendid position right in the forefront of the proceedings. But the voice that had shaken hardened witnesses was too much for him.

"No-n-yessir!" he admitted meekly.

I piloted him back under the wing of his agitated teacher. He looked very sulky, but he was a true Briton really, for when the royal party arrived he led the children's cheering in a voice altogether out of proportion with his fairly diminutive body.

I recall one other story, of a man whom I at first mistook for a close friend of His Majesty—but who was nothing of the sort. The affair was, in its way, a bizarre one.

I had been at Goodwood Races in August 1923, attendant on the King, and was strolling along the Embankment that evening, at peace with the world, when suddenly I saw a burly form step out of a taxi, pay it off, and go and lean on the parapet, looking down at the silent Thames. The figure, the top-hat, even the unmistakable aroma of the distinctive cigar—I could

not be mistaken in supposing it to be one of England's leading sporting peers.

Yet, to my certain knowledge, that peer was on the boat-train that by this time should be nearly to Dover. I happened to know, because a Special Branch man had been detailed to see him off from London, in view of the suspected activities of certain race-gangs at the time.

I looked hard at the handsome figure in evening dress, and then touched him on the arm. I was all ready with an apology, but it was not needed, for I saw a shadow of fear flicker in the man's eyes. This was *not* a peer at all, though the extraordinary resemblance was certainly more than accidental. This man before me had made himself up, in face and clothes, to counterfeit the real nobleman.

"All right—you're a detective, aren't you?" he said, saving me the trouble of asking questions. "I guess you want to arrest me?"

Now, there is no law forbidding a man to copy another's peculiarities of dress and habits, no matter how distinguished a man he chooses to copy. This fellow before me, so long as he could prove that he had not indulged in the masquerade for illegal purposes, had done nothing wrong.

"You'd better tell me your story," I said. "I don't want to arrest you unless I have to."

He plunged into an amazing tale. He said he had been at a famous public school with the peer for whom I had mistaken him. They were of an age, and extraordinarily alike, so that everyone chaffed them about their likeness. As was not unnatural, they became keen rivals.

The rivalry lasted after they left school, and subsequently when they passed from Oxford together. The other man had advantages of birth, but, if my narrator was to be believed, he was the more brilliant man. He began to amass a fortune, with the definite idea of obtaining a peerage eventually and, if possible, becoming more celebrated than his noble "double".

Overwork brought a breakdown, and he went to the South of France to recuperate. In one night, at the Monte Carlo gaming-tables, he reduced himself from riches to penury.

He grew ill and could not get a job. Then he drifted, and finally took a place as a shopwalker in a big West End stores, getting the job because of his amazing likeness to the peer who had been his rival—the shop people said that it attracted the interest of customers.

His young wife died, largely because he could not afford specialist's advice for her. He lost ambition, and decided to drift on as a shopwalker for the rest of his life.

In only one way did he depart from the code of his new existence. He lived in one room, saved his money until a good deal had accumulated, and then, deliberately dressing as and imitating the gestures and mannerisms of his famous "double", he appeared in the West End for an occasional evening, at a time when he knew that the real man was unlikely to meet him there.

On those hectic evenings he tipped waiters with pound-notes, drank champagne, smoked Corona-Coronas, travelled even for a few yards by taxi, and fully lived up to the reputation of the man he impersonated. Indeed, he did not actually impersonate him ; he was careful never to give a name, but obsequious servants and officials supplied the lack for him, being only too

anxious to do all they could for the notably generous nobleman for whom they naturally mistook him.

The deception was innocent enough in its way, but I suggested to the gentleman-shopwalker that perhaps he might be wiser to put an end to it. He threw his cigar-butt into the dark Thames water gliding by below us.

"I shan't ever do it again," he said. "When I felt your hand on my shoulder tonight, I knew that the game was up for good and all. I've always been scared to death of arrest, and even though you've taken a decent view of my games, and even though I swear to God there's no harm in them, yet some day I might get pulled into the police-court. It would lose me my job, and bring a lot of nasty publicity to my name. And I'm proud of that still, even though I dare say you think I've lived a waster's life."

I happen to know that the impersonation stopped from that night.

CHAPTER XI

When kings travel—The royal detective abroad—British Royalties in the Orient—Assuring royal safety by land, sea, and air—Making the sports of kings safe—Forestalling the "smile on the face of the tiger" !

So far in this story I have dealt almost entirely with the work of the royal detective as it is carried out in his own homeland. This work is difficult and exacting, but it is a bagatelle compared with the task before the detective officer who is chosen to accompany a royal person on a foreign tour.

At home, the populace is loyal, and itself constitutes a barrier around its sovereign, surrounding him with a circle of affection through which it is both difficult and dangerous for the assassin to penetrate. At home, the detective has at his disposal the police organization of his country, should need arise. He knows that the movements of suspected strangers will be duly reported ; that such strangers will find it difficult even to enter the country ; that, in the event of possible trouble arising, the antecedents and associates of almost any dangerous individual can be checked up within a few hours.

Abroad, all this is changed. Despite the best of intentions, a visiting detective cannot command the same confidence or co-operation as he is accustomed to at home. He has to watch his step in case he commits

some indiscretion against local police etiquette ; he has to avoid unwittingly giving offence to the foreign detectives among whom he moves in the country visited ; he is at a loss to sense the feelings of crowds among which he has to mingle ; and he has no longer got the matchless resources of Scotland Yard at his beck and call.

Meanwhile, the risks unavoidably surrounding a royal person who travels in a foreign land are inevitably greater than those he must meet in his own country. The crowds among which he moves are likely to contain a higher proportion of disaffected units ; opportunities are less complete for his attendants to check up that every vehicle to which he trusts himself, every inch of road or rail along which he passes, and every person who may come within striking distance of him, is devoid of either capability or intention of causing trouble.

Perhaps the most necessary factor in the equipment of a detective who accompanies a king abroad is a perfect understanding of the language, idiom, habits, and psychology of the nation to be visited.

I always remember the story of a Russian detective who visited Paris in the Tsar's train a short while before the war. His French was not up to the standard of his undoubted abilities as a tracker of malefactors.

"*Etes-vous un fumier, monsieur?*" he inquired of a French detective who had been placed at the Tsar's disposal during the visit. At the same time, he fumbled for a cigarette-case, but unhappily produced, during his search, an embroidered pocket-handkerchief.

"*Monsieur!*" exclaimed the Frenchman furiously.

The Russian had tried to ask if his *vis-à-vis* was a smoker (*fumeur*), instead of which he had asked if he

was a manure-heap. The production of the handkerchief completed the illusion.

The Tsar's attendant started at the whip-lash tone in which he had been answered—it is not improbable that his French colleague used perfume, since many Frenchmen do so.

"I take it, then, that you are not a manure-heap?" he countered coldly, ceasing his search for the cigarette-case.

The result was a challenge to a duel at a later date. Luckily, the *faux-pas* was explained before the duel took place, and the Russian prevailed upon to proffer stiff apologies, which were accepted no less stiffly. But the two detectives observed only the most frigid politeness during the rest of the visit; and that is not the way to ensure royal safety in a strange land.

The British Royal Family travel more widely, probably, than any of their contemporaries—perhaps more widely than any royal family has ever done before. There is never a time when one or other of them is not either in one of the Dominions or Colonies, or else visiting the Court of some foreign ruler. Of my own experiences in Belgium as an attendant on Their Majesties I shall tell later; meanwhile, I propose to show you behind the scenes a little, and give an idea of what happens when the Prince of Wales goes on one of his long tours, or the King himself responds to an invitation from one of his brother sovereigns to visit a foreign capital.

The special train in which the royal person travels from London to the British coast is as safe as Buckingham Palace—thanks to the activities of the railway company concerned. Then, the sea journey is accomplished either

on board a British warship, or on the royal yacht *Victoria and Albert*, or on board a great liner. In the first two cases, the immediate duties of the attendant detectives detailed by the Special Branch to accompany the royal person are more or less of a sinecure.

On a liner, the circumstances are slightly different. Nowhere do more opportunities occur for ill-disposed persons to attain proximity to their royal quarry than on board ship. At least, so it would seem to the anarchist agent dreaming mad dreams of a new world to be ushered in by the roar of a bomb or the crack of a revolver.

In actual fact, the anarchist deceives himself. The passenger-list is examined by the best detectives of two nations ; every name is checked and counter-checked ; and trouble-makers would find it quite impossible ever to set foot on board. The antecedents of the crew are subjected to the same microscopic examination. Even dockside loungers do not escape.

When the Royalty at last walks up the gangway, amid cheers that are joyously endorsed by the liner's siren, he or she is surrounded by admirers and friends, and the shadow of ill-disposed persons is far away. Every care is taken to see that the journey is pleasurable and safe, and, long before the liner berths in a foreign port, the most detailed arrangements are undertaken to ensure that no trouble will arise there.

Arrived in the country of destination, the first task of the Special Branch men who accompany the royal visitor is to put themselves at the disposal of the detective officers there who have been entrusted with the safety of the tour.

The programme of royal movements has, in the main,

already been arranged ; fresh details may be inserted as occasion arises, but all are subject to the essential requirement that there shall be no risk of disturbance or annoyance being caused.

It is absolutely essential that perfect understanding shall exist between the detectives attached to the visitor and those allotted to him for his visit. It was said at the time that the attempt on the life of the Shah of Persia in Paris in 1900, when a man jumped on the step of the royal carriage and pointed a revolver at the Shah's head, only to have the weapon struck from his hand by a Persian attendant, so nearly achieved its object entirely through a difference between the Persian and French detectives in charge. Except on that morning, the Shah was always accompanied by a troop of cavalry ; their absence that day gave the would-be assassin his opportunity, and they were absent, so it was said, because the Shah's attendants changed the time of his drive without giving warning to the Sûreté of their intention.

A much more recent attempt at anarchist assassination in Europe, which ended fatally, was also due to a misunderstanding which resulted in a defect in the guarding arrangements surrounding a certain royal person. He paid the penalty with his life.

Since King Edward was Prince of Wales, when an anarchist lad, Sipido, sent a bullet within an inch of His Royal Highness's hat, no murder attempt has been made on any British Royalty abroad. In these stormy times that speaks volumes for the tact, as well as the ability, of the men of the Special Branch.

Perhaps the most difficult of all occasions, as far as detective work was concerned, when a British sovereign went abroad, was on the visit of the King and Queen

ESPIONAGE CASE, REX *v.* HEINRICH GROSSE, 1912. SERGEANT HERBERT FITCH, SPECIAL BRANCH, INSPECTOR PERCY SAVAGE AND SERGEANT SIMPKINS, PORTSMOUTH DOCKYARD C.I.D.

ALBERT, Roi des Belges,

A tous, présents et à venir, Salut.

Voulant donner un témoignage de Notre bienveillance à Mr. FILCH, Inspecteur de police;

Sur la proposition de Notre Ministre des Affaires Etrangères,

Nous avons arrêté et arrêtons :

Article 1er Mr. FILCH est nommé OFFICIER de l'Ordre de Léopold II.

Article 2. – Il *prendra rang dans l'Ordre,* à dater de ce jour.

Article 3 . — *Notre Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, ayant l'administration de l'Ordre, est chargé de l'exécution du présent arrêté.*

Donné à Bruxelles, le 8 mai 1922.

(s) **Albert.**

PAR LE ROI :

Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères,

(s) Henri JASPAR.

POUR COPIE CONFORME :

Le Secrétaire Général

p.i. du Département des Affaires Etrangères,

ROYAL ORDER FROM KING ALBERT CREATING MR. FITCH *Officier de l'Ordre de Léopold II*

to India, shortly after the Coronation. India offers a perplexing problem to the guardian of the royal person. There, he has not merely to overcome the difficulties of a hundred languages and a thousand dialects and the opportunities for trouble presented by such dense crowds and such blind, crazy, latticed buildings as exist nowhere else on earth, but he has to cope with the risk of unwittingly offending the devotee of one of a score or more of religions, any of whose fanatical followers would commit murder on king or commoner for so slight a thing as the accidental casting of an unbeliever's shadow on the devotee's food or clothes.

I can give no clearer impression of the gigantic task that lay before the Special Branch men on that Durbar tour of India than by recounting some of the events which took place during its progress.

Stepping ashore on Indian soil from the P. & O. liner *Medina*, the King and Queen were greeted by crowds of natives that surpassed all imagination. One *fakir* had walked for over five months from Madura, fifteen hundred miles away in the south, to see the "Shadow of God on Earth" land in India. Vast hordes of people followed the royal progress from the coast to Delhi, the ancient capital of the Moguls, so that, according to one of the detectives who was present, "it seemed as if the Last Day had arrived, and the peoples of the earth were trooping up for judgment". Still mightier hordes had already gathered at Delhi.

When His Majesty rode out from Delhi on the day after his arrival, to show himself to his people, the royal procession of elephants, horsemen, and troops passed between brown walls of shouting people stretching on either side of the route farther than the eye could see.

Thousands of them had lived, slept, and eaten in their places for weeks previously.

How was a detective to make certain that among that fierce-eyed multitude there was not one dissentient fanatic, not one hemp-maddened murderer? Suffice it to say that, one or two suspected persons having been removed out of harm's way, and a careful examinaton having been made of the troops who immediately lined the route, the glorious procession passed in safety and amid unbroken cheering.

An even greater test took place on the actual day of the Durbar. Hundreds of thousands of Indians, excited to the last degree of enthusiasm, formed a vast sea of brown around the thrones where the Emperor and Empress sat to receive homage. Despite extraordinary precautions, the pressure of the onlookers could not be withstood. While Their Majesties sat in a golden pavilion near by, receiving the Princes of India's homage, the brown-skinned sea burst its barriers and came suddenly sweeping across the ground to the thrones where the King and Queen had been sitting before they retired to the pavilion.

Thousands of them, in an unending tide, came up to the empty thrones and prostrated themselves there, reverently touching with their lips the ground on which the great King-Emperor had stood. Several hundreds of thousands of people performed this spontaneous act of homage, the queue continuing for three or four days to pass the sanctified place.

At one period during this amazing procession, the King and Queen went out and stood near the thrones, so that their subjects might see and remember them. Even then, though the net of safety was invisible around

them, their detectives made sure that it was there and that it was unbreakable.

During that visit, His Majesty indulged in some exciting tiger-hunts, as the Prince of Wales has done over the same ground since. I have often been asked how it is that kings and princes can taste the thrills of this and other very dangerous sports without taking risks that would be unpermissible to persons of such State importance, and yet without being robbed of the excitement that gives the sport its zest.

The arrangement of such things is obviously not easy. In tiger-hunting alone, famous people are not infrequently mauled and occasionally some are killed. In other exciting sports, such as polo, ski-ing, hunting, pig-sticking, and shooting big-game on foot, there are always apparent certain risks. Everyone knows the suggestive little limerick about the young lady from Niger, and how she finished her ride with the lady inside and "a smile on the face of the tiger" !

The whole world would stand aghast if any catastrophe occurred while a royal person was indulging in a few days' sport.

When the King was in India for the Durbar tour, most of his tiger-hunting took place from the backs of well-trained elephants. The risks from such a position are certainly not so great as on foot ; but there are still risks. Tigers have been known to spring at the howdah containing the sportsman and attack him there.

To prevent any such mishap, attendants who are absolutely crack shots are always at hand, waiting with loaded rifles to pick off any maddened or wounded animal that shows signs of becoming dangerous.

There is also, obviously, a risk of trouble of another

sort. What more apparent opportunity for the would-be assassin than the excitement of a hunt through the jungle, with all its million hidden lairs ! Here, again, the royal detective exerts his unsleeping vigilance.

The beaters, elephant-drivers, and attendants are all picked men, of known and proved loyalty. The area over which the hunt will take place is studied with care. The detective is never far away, always alert, ready to forestall any attempt at trouble. The trouble never comes to British Royalties or sovereigns visiting British territories, but that is because the finest detective force in the world has done all that is necessary—beforehand.

The same principles are followed in such sports as hunting, polo, and so on. Attendants see to it that the animals to be ridden are even-tempered and steady ; that harness is tested and strong ; and that onlookers never have the means or the opportunity to cause any sort of disturbance.

There is, however, one pastime—one can hardly call it a dangerous sport—in which some of the younger kings and many princes indulge, which has always seemed to me to hold more than its reasonable share of risk. I refer to driving.

I have acted as detective attendant to several royal persons who frequently drive their own cars. Most of them are admittedly excellent drivers, and their cars are always tested and kept in perfect condition for them. But the state of the roads nowadays is not such that a person of very great State importance should venture on them too often, save when being driven by a professional driver. Accidents do not always occur because of the driver's fault, but because of someone

else on the road at the same time ; and it is inconceivable that a nation should be thrown into mourning because some road-hog had caused an irreparable catastrophe.

Perhaps I think this because, strictly speaking, I do not belong to the generation which has made the motor-car its plaything, or perhaps because, having served kings as their detective, I see more clearly than most the trouble that an unseen risk may cause. At least, one can never believe that too much care can be taken ; the tragic death of King Albert of the Belgians, while himself engaged in a favourite sport of kings, proves that.

Aeroplanes add yet another danger to the ones that already surround royal persons. When an ordinary man travels by air, he carries his own risk with him ; but a king carries the anxiety of a whole empire. For all that, I consider aircraft as less dangerous than cars ; they are always specially selected and faultlessly flown, and so far I do not believe any royal person has "flown solo", while the air is not crowded with dangerous incompetents, as the roads are even now.

The safest of all forms of transport for kings is probably still the railway train. Special trains are almost invariably used ; they generally consist of an engine and tender, a brake-saloon containing the royal servants, a saloon with railway directors and attachés, the royal saloon, a royal dining saloon, a saloon for guests and secretaries, another compartment for members of the staff, and a brake-saloon in which the royal detectives are placed. Royal trains are usually preceded by a pilot engine ; and, of course, every inch of the track is examined beforehand.

It may seem to some people that excessive pre-

cautions are taken to safeguard Royalties on their travels. A moment's reflection will show how necessary such care always is. I need say no more than this—that the Sarajevo murders plunged Europe into carnage, and such another murder might do the same thing to-morrow, if it took place. We may feel sure, however, that it will not take place in England, now or ever.

A list of some of the countries which, for example, the Prince of Wales has recently visited, will show the variety of problems likely to be placed before the royal detective. His Royal Highness, who incidentally is a notably fearless person, has been to Canada, South Africa, India, Australia, the United States, South America, Hong Kong, New Zealand, the Malay Peninsula, and the Philippines.

On only one occasion did the police arrangements break down, and then it was because the enthusiasm of the immense mob was greater than any human being could possibly have anticipated. It was during the Prince of Wales' tour of India after the war. On one of his car journeys through some crowded streets, the masses of natives simply swept away all barriers, and surged so closely around the cars that all progress was stopped.

There has never been any similar demonstration of feeling to equal this outburst of affection and reverence for the son of the King-Emperor. Witnesses who were present say that the scene was indescribable. When progress was resumed, tens of thousands of spectators walked slowly along beside the cars, cheering and chanting to the Prince, while his chauffeur advanced at slow walking pace through a mob that opened step by step, closing in solidly behind as the car moved forward. Accompanying cars were separated from him by thou-

sands of onlookers. In this way, surrounded and locked in by his father's subjects, guarded by them a thousand times more wonderfully than if he had been enclosed by the finest Guards regiment in the world, the Prince went on his way, amid such greetings as the teeming peoples of India give only to the greatest and best-loved rulers of all India's dark history.

CHAPTER XII

When foreign royal detectives come to England—An old Spanish custom—Scotland Yard men abroad—A Bulgarian who wasn't—Why assassinations occur abroad—Foreign detective organizations—A French detective in trouble—Some Republican "royal detectives".

A VERY famous colleague of mine at the Yard used to keep on his office desk a small framed motto : "The first duty of a detective is to detect !" Often, in my dealings with the detectives from abroad who visited England in the trains of their royal masters, I was obsessed with a burning desire to repeat that apparently obvious yet imperfectly observed little maxim.

For some of them, at any rate, seemed to think that the first duty of a royal detective was to make himself obvious, to fill his responsible position with becoming glory and hauteur, and to criticize what they stigmatized as the apparent sang-froid with which the British police services conducted themselves during the visit of a friendly sovereign. They were, of course, blissfully unaware that half a dozen pairs of eyes were watching everything unsuspected even by the Royalties themselves, or that this or the other casual-looking passer-by was probably a detective-inspector who understood their every syllable.

Certain of the world's detective forces seem to think

that a domineering military bearing, an abrupt voice, and a revolver constitute the finest guard that any ruler can have. They, in particular, were disgusted to learn that our detectives here not only do not commonly carry firearms or swords, but that they usually work without even a baton.

On the other hand, it is possible always to summon suitable police assistance ; and the detective himself has a pretty wide knowledge of jiu-jitsu, boxing, and wrestling. The British detective system succeeds where others fail ; kings are safe in England ; but these things the foreigner attributes to our well-known national luck.

When I was attached to the service of King Alfonso of Spain, during his first visit to England after his accession, I had an amusing example of foreign detective activity, but it might have ended tragically had not that conventional "luck" stood by us.

King Alfonso was travelling by car across London, and a Spanish detective attendant and myself followed in a taxi. There was a traffic-jam in a rather slummy street near Paddington, and the car ahead of us drew up. While we waited behind it, a decrepit old Ford car just ahead of King Alfonso's, whose defective engine had caused it to stop in the middle of the road and so start the hold-up, got going again, but back-fired with a sound somewhat resembling that of a pistol-shot.

In a moment, a big man in a grey suit, who was strolling by on the kerb, looked sharply round, and took a step or two towards the Ford, which was now noisily getting under way. Simultaneously, the foreign detective by my side hauled a wicked-looking revolver from his coat-pocket and tried to level it at the man near the kerb.

I got his wrist before he could raise the weapon, and explained briefly that the grey-suited stranger was a Special Branch detective, and my own superior in rank. Whether my companion did not hear me properly, I cannot say, but he still struggled violently, and one or two men on the pavement started to stare at us unpleasantly. The Paddington district, at that time, was a rough one, and the sight of a firearm thus ostentatiously waved about might have caused serious trouble.

Fortunately for us all, the Ford managed to move away out of the road, King Alfonso's car glided ahead, and our taxi followed. The detective onlooker disappeared, and the gathering crowd of men was left behind. After a time, I managed to quiet my companion, and explain fully to him that the explosion he had heard was from the Ford, not from the revolver of an assassin, and that the man against whom he had apparently directed his own suspicions was merely another link in the chain of safety that the Special Branch had thrown around King Alfonso's person.

It is a curious fact that quite a large proportion of the detectives abroad whose duty it is to guard the person of the sovereign of the country in which they live are ex-Scotland Yard men. I shall tell in another place how the Tsar of Russia tentatively asked me to join his detective service ; such advances from visiting rulers are not rare.

There is something about the British detective that seems vastly to appeal to kings and queens from overseas. Perhaps it is that we are trained to be quiet and unostentatious ; that we never intrude, and that the royal person often does not notice his guardian from one day to another, while still resting assured that he is near,

even though invisible. Certainly, if I were a king, I should hate to be obviously "shadowed", or to give the impression that I did not trust the subjects or the strangers among whom I was called upon to move. Then, again, the fact that, since its formation, the Special Branch has an absolutely unbroken record of success regarding the royal persons it has guarded, not one of whom has even been subjected to serious annoyance while under the care of our men, may seem to some harassed foreign rulers a magic it would be well to transfer to their more turbulent lands.

At least, it is certain that one of the Kaiser's attendants for a long period was an ex-English detective of the name of Bell ; and I have heard it said that another went to the Tsar's service a year or two before the war, and lost his life, so it was said, through the treachery of a jealous colleague in St. Petersburg.

When King Ferdinand of Bulgaria was in England, I was attached to his suite to see to the safety of his person, and there I met a detective from Bulgaria who, though not Scotland Yard trained, was English by birth, and was the son of a former brilliant London detective. I discovered that he and I had another curious link.

When we first met, at the time of King Ferdinand's arrival in London, he spoke to me in English, though he naturally could use the language of his new country like a native. We were discussing various experiences and talking "shop" when a reference of mine to my service in the South African Mounted Police made him look up.

"Were you ever offered a job in the Diamond Fields Police ?" he asked.

I told him that I had been offered such a job just

before I left South Africa for the Criminal Investigation Department over here.

"What a queer thing!" he said. "I was offered the same job, but turned it down to go to Bulgaria. I used to be in the Johannesburg Police just before that."

I had also served in the Johannesburg Police for a short time, but had never met him there. It's a small world, after all!

Despite the fact that foreign rulers obtain Scotland Yard men, if they can, to act as guards, the list of royal assassinations abroad does not end. During this century, there have been royal assassination attempts in France, Italy, Austria, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Persia, and Russia. Many of these efforts have been tragically successful.

The reason is, of course, that no amount of individual brilliance in detective officers can make up for imperfect co-operation in the rank and file. In this book, I may perhaps have given the impression that the task of the Special Branch man chosen for royal detective work is something in which he plays a lone hand. If I have conveyed such an idea, let me emphatically reverse it now.

In his immediate guarding of the sovereign who is given into his charge, he naturally works solo to some degree ; but the ground is always prepared for him, and kept clear for him, by the ordinary unnamed detective officers of our police force. Although foreign orders and decorations seldom reach them, although the part they play is considered routine work, yet there is never any jealousy or undue rivalry from them. Without their skilful, loyal co-operation, night and day, year in and year out, the Special Branch man who is the pinnacle of

the detective system that guards our royal visitors and our rulers would not be able to carry out his job.

Ports are watched, suspects are kept under observation, railways and roads are guarded, crowds are kept good-humoured and steady, reports come in and are checked hour by hour and instructions are issued and meticulously carried out—and the top-hatted detective who walks in the royal shadow can rely on all these things being perfectly done.

Abroad, things are not the same. In pre-war Russia, as in several other countries today, the royal detective is looked upon askance by his professional brethren. They treat him, when they can, as schoolboys treat one of their number who is unduly favoured by the schoolmaster. They mistrust him, try to obtain credit for themselves, even discredit him.

The result is chaos. Even the most bulldog personal loyalty, even a great willingness to die to save a beloved royal master, cannot compensate for lack of detective co-operation. The odds then are on the assassin.

Conditions in America are even worse. The inter-State jealousy often reaches such a pitch that a murderer can slip over the border into a neighbouring State and be almost consciously shielded by the forces of law and order there. Visiting detectives are given clearly to understand in certain States that they are not wanted poking about over country that does not own them or their authority. Justice, in fact, is doled out in water-tight compartments; but unfortunately the compartments are not sealed against the leakage of criminals.

Of course, visiting kings are nowhere so safe as in republican countries—that is an axiom. The glory and honour of being visited by a crowned head makes the

rival detectives sink their differences for once—at least, so long as no apparent preference is shown for any particular party, and Royalties are far too tactful to err in that direction. But American politicians seem to go in daily dread of being "bumped off"; would-be presidents wear steel waistcoats and have armed gunmen tramping in their train ; and the armed gunman is a much rougher and less reliable sort of guard than the royal detective or what ought to be his republican equivalent.

Royalties, at the moment, do not visit Soviet Russia, yet I have been told that the Cheka is the most formidable and perfect detective organization in the world.

Myself, I take leave to doubt it, for I hold it a necessity that a good detective organization should be friendly with, not terrorizing to, the people among whom it moves. Also, I believe, Cheka members are always armed ; and I deplore the methods which make firearms a necessity to preservers of law and order.

But, at least, the Cheka seems to do its job well. In a notably lawless land, where royal assassination attempts formerly were almost annual affairs, and whose last royal family ended in a holocaust from which none of the direct line escaped, the Cheka has apparently stopped all menaces towards the series of dictators who have since taken the place of kings. Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, and the rest, though they perplex in other ways, evidently have not walked in constant dread of the murderer whose shadow lies so dark behind most of the European thrones. As much cannot be said for the dictators of Austria, Italy, and Germany.

One of the finest of the foreign detective organizations is undoubtedly the Sûreté of Paris. It has been my

privilege at several stages of my career to meet French detectives from this body, and I have a most wholesome respect for their abilities. More recently, as a member of the International Secret Service Association and of the World Association of Detectives, I have met some of them on rather different ground, and admired them no less.

France has always been the playground of royal persons. King Edward was often there on holiday ; and, to my knowledge, Russian, Austrian, German, Italian, Greek, Dutch, Spanish, Belgian, Persian, and Eastern rulers as well as Queen Victoria and King George have visited France during the past thirty years or so. Undoubtedly a great reason for this partiality was the tact and sureness of the Parisian detectives who were placed at the disposal of the various royal persons. Nor, judging from my own experiences, would it always be an easy task for a republican to fulfil the various requirements of certain of the visiting foreign kings !

I suppose that rulers from the Orient are always liable to cause more excitement to their detective guardians than any European Royalty. I know of one occasion at least when such a visitor nearly started a riot.

The story was told me by a French detective who for many years was appointed to look after his country's royal visitors. He was, at the time, attendant on the King of Cambodia, who had been to some sort of military review in a French provincial town.

The dark-skinned Majesty was well received by the crowd, and accepted their cheering so delightedly that, on returning to his hotel, he began to fling handfuls of gold from one of the windows among the applauding

onlookers. In a moment, a dangerous squabble ensued, as the people stamped, fought, and swore while grabbing at the gold under their feet.

This excitement delighted the King, who went on flinging gold among them till he was unceremoniously hustled from the window. By that time, he was thoroughly worked up, and ran swiftly upstairs, starting to throw more gold from a first-floor window, while detectives raced after him.

From window to window he fled, laughing and shouting, while the mob below swelled and grew out of control, and sent up a long-drawn savage roar for more gold. People were trampled on and knocked unconscious, and police came rushing to the scene of the riot.

Finally, the detective in charge of the King managed to drive him to an inner room and frankly lock him in. Meanwhile, the streets outside had to be cleared by means of baton charges.

Responsible persons were sent for, and they pleaded with the dusky Royalty not to harbour too much resentment against the detective who, in the interests of law and order, had forcibly stopped him from distributing his gold so generously. But the King was sullen, and the detective suffered somewhat because he had done what was no more than his duty.

Probably the most famous of the "royal detectives" of France was Xavier Paoli, who died some years ago, and to whose capable hands were entrusted British Royalties ranging from Queen Victoria to our present Sovereign and various members of his family, as well as representatives of a dozen or more of the other leading royal families of Europe.

One of Paoli's most amusing stories concerns our own

King Edward, to whom he often acted as detective attendant. There were at Biarritz, when His Late Majesty stayed there, certain beggars who more or less traded on the King's notable generosity. At least, it may perhaps be more charitable to say that, though they were often absent from their "pitches" at other times, they were always present when King Edward took his morning stroll that way.

Once, one of them was absent. So surprised was the King that he called M. Paoli to him and asked what had happened to the missing beggar. Paoli did not know. Next morning, the mendicant was in his appointed place.

"Where were you yesterday?" asked King Edward kindly. "Were you ill? I did not see you here."

"No, Sire, I was not ill," stammered the beggar.

"Well, then, you were late?"

"If you please, Sire, I think you were early!"

The man had so obviously blurted out the words without thinking that the King laughed.

"A thousand apologies for my error!" he exclaimed, while the unfortunate beggar was overcome with embarrassment. And then the King dropped exactly twice his usual alms into the man's cap.

A rather disturbing incident occurred on another of King Edward's visits to France, at a time when one of Paoli's colleagues was temporarily in charge. The King was taking one of those incognito strolls of which he was so fond when he noticed a beggar selling matches in the gutter. Without hesitation, he walked up to the man and spoke to him.

This was in 1907, I believe, just after some serious rioting in Paris in connection with Labour Day meetings.

Gangs of anarchists had been broken up by the police a short while earlier, and shooting had taken place. Information had subsequently been received at the Sûreté that anarchists, disguised as beggars, would be infesting Paris for some time, intent on causing further disturbances.

The story of what happened after the King went up to this particular match-seller was told me later by the English detective who had accompanied His Majesty to Paris. The man was obviously in great distress, and King Edward asked him what was the matter. A distressing story followed.

The beggar's wife was very ill, and had been taken that day to a workhouse hospital. The man was begging now in order to try to get money to buy food for a baby daughter.

While the King was listening to this tale, the French detectives in whose care he had been placed were on mental tenterhooks round a near-by corner. They dared not interfere, since King Edward hated "shadowing"; but they were horribly worried by the memory of the warning they had received against all mendicants.

Finally, the King turned to one of his secretaries, who had been chosen that morning to accompany him on his walk.

"See to it that this man's wife is properly cared for, and that he has enough to give himself and his child a little human comfort while she is getting better," he commanded in his curt way.

The beggar understood English sufficiently to follow the remark. For a moment he stood staring and gulping. Then he said: "I know now who you are. You are the

King of England. I must tell you it is an anarchist for whom you do all this !"

"An anarchist, are you ?" said the King, studying him quietly. "Well, remember in future that kings are not so bad as they are sometimes painted."

"Sire ! Sire . . ." stammered the man in the gutter. But the King had continued his walk, and the thankful detectives moved on again in his wake.

CHAPTER XIII

Memories of the Kaiser—When he measured a dead body—Attendant on him at the unveiling of Queen Victoria's statue in the Mall—A Liverpool story—Presented with a German Order.

A SMALL, stiff, eager man with a keen face and an all-seeing eye—that was my first impression of William II, King of Prussia, and German Emperor, when I was appointed to the task of seeing to his safety in England. Contrary to the almost universal opinion in England today, fostered by war propaganda, the Kaiser was possessed of a most charming personality, and his abrupt military voice always said the right thing. As a man, I liked him, and, politics apart, believe I should like him still.

But when I was first informed that attendance on this strange and brilliant figure had been allotted to me, I must confess I was rather uneasy. For the Kaiser had a most autocratic reputation ; and he was a man who cared very little for convention, and might at any time have taken some course of action, spontaneously and without considering the results, which would have put his detective guard to some considerable embarrassment.

For example, I may perhaps quote a story of his actions in Rome a few years before this visit to England. He went to call on the Pope, and at the conclusion of the

interview tried to hand personally to that august cleric a gold snuff-box which was then a usual royal acknowledgement of a Papal reception. A Vatican official stepped forward, scandalized that anyone should dare to offer such a thing direct to the Pope. But the Kaiser preferred to deal only with principals, and there was something like a minor scuffle before the official gained possession of the snuff-box !

The ruler of Germany was thoroughly annoyed and, in leaving the Palace, refused to return by the tedious and winding passages through which he had approached the presence. He saw a door on his left, sharply ordered his suite to follow him, and walked up to the exit, only to be faced by a monk who sternly informed him that the door in question was only opened on ceremonial occasions for the use of the Pope himself.

After fruitless argument and useless commands that the door should be opened at once, the Emperor and his suite had to return along the passage and then retrace their steps to the door at which they had originally entered the Vatican !

I naturally did not want any such affair to occur while I was attached to the Kaiser's staff in England, for I should have been such an obvious person for him to visit with his wrath.

His carelessness of conventions may be judged from the fact that, when Queen Victoria died, the Emperor refused to allow the undertakers to measure the body for its shell. He turned them out of the room, in fact, and took the measurements himself perfectly accurately, which must be a most difficult accomplishment for a novice in that sort of thing. But he was a man who could never help "taking the stage".

One of my first experiences of the wayward will of the German Emperor was when I was sent for by one of his secretaries, a Bavarian nobleman of considerable importance whom I had previously met in connection with some of the arrangements for the Kaiser's comfort in London.

"His Imperial Majesty wishes figures of the commercial shipping that passes through the port of Liverpool in a year," said the Baron uneasily. "Would it be possible for you to help us to obtain such figures, Mr. Fitch ? He has a great scheme on foot for developing the Hamburg-America trade on the lines Liverpool has used."

It was a poser to a poor detective, but I said I would do my best. The Baron threw up his white hand nervously.

"His Imperial Majesty wishes the figures to study after luncheon today !" he announced.

A clock was ticking almost noiselessly in the quiet, luxurious room. It registered five minutes to eleven.

"I'll do my best," I said, "but the task is a colossal one to be undertaken in three hours."

"I know—I know !" was the reply. "But we are constantly given such tasks. We dare not fail to accomplish them, *mein Herr.* If you can help us . . ."

Within five minutes the telephone wires to Liverpool had begun to sing. I spoke to police officials there, and to shipping magnates, to directors and secretaries, to port authorities and Customs officials. Seldom have I worked so hard.

At a quarter past two, lunchless, my brain whirling from the strain of digesting figures about a subject until that day quite unknown to me, I stood once more in the

quiet Palace room where the Baron had received me. I handed him an attaché-case bulging with typewritten sheets and reports and printed matter. He heaved a great sigh of relief.

"I did not think it could be done," he said. "We shall all be very grateful to you for this, His Imperial Majesty not the least."

I heard no more of the incident for a week. Then the Kaiser sent for me. Knowing his moods, and having ceased to expect to hear more of the Liverpool affair, I wondered if I was to be "put on the carpet".

Germany's ruler was sitting at a table littered with papers and technical-looking plans and charts. Other papers smothered the floor around his feet. He gave the impression of an architect or engineer at a peak period of working rush.

"You obtained, I am told, some details about Liverpool shipping for me," he said, in his queer, abrupt manner. "How did you get them in the time ?"

I explained briefly, and added that I was only able to do so because all the officials concerned had co-operated so perfectly with me. I pointed out that it was always the wish of everyone in England to serve His Majesty's visitors in every possible way.

The Kaiser nodded. Then he asked me a few questions about the figures, which showed me that he had gained a mastery over them that I would not have expected from anyone who had not spent years studying marine affairs.

"I appreciate this," he said briefly, indicating the papers as he dismissed me. "I like coming to England more than to any other foreign country. Germany and England have much in common."

I happened to notice the time as I left his presence, because it was the same—five minutes to eleven—as the hour at which I had first interviewed his secretary about the matter. As I emerged, the Baron met me.

"He asked you about the figures, Mr. Fitch?" he inquired.

I replied in the affirmative.

"He only started studying them this morning!" announced the Baron proudly.

I expressed surprise that His Imperial Majesty should have obtained such a grasp of the details in so short a time.

"He has been working over them for five hours," I was told. "He often rises at 5 a.m."

The Kaiser was a prodigious worker at all times. He had the reputation of never being out of reach of at least one of his secretaries, whether he was on his yacht, at home in Potsdam, or in Buckingham Palace. I was told by a member of his suite that he had to change his secretaries frequently, because they could not stand the pace at which their royal master worked. I have sometimes thought, judging from what I have seen of kings, that the task of being a royal detective, onerous as it is, can sometimes be easier than the work of being a king.

When the Kaiser was over here to attend the unveiling of the Queen Victoria Memorial in the Mall, outside Buckingham Palace, he made one of the most splendid figures at that magnificent ceremony. I was close to him as he walked with the King and Queen and other royal persons from Buckingham Palace to the veiled statue. The service was conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the choirs of St. Paul's and

Westminster led some magnificent singing. After the service, the Kaiser placed a wonderful wreath on the foot of the memorial, and the King, in a long speech, referred to the strong and living ties of friendship between England and Germany.

It is a commentary on the twisting paths of international politics that the next time a visit of the Kaiser to England was proposed was in 1919, when hoardings were covered with posters saying "Hang the Kaiser!" —and it was seriously proposed that the man who had been greeted with such acclamations by the British crowds before the war should now be haled over and tried for his life.

Whatever his guilt or otherwise concerning the war, the Kaiser in pre-war days certainly esteemed and venerated the memory of his grandmother, Queen Victoria, and held a considerable and genuine affection for her country and its people. While he was over here for the unveiling of her memorial, he paid a fine tribute to the late Queen's memory.

"She was the greatest ruler who ever lived," he said to me. "In these days of crumbling monarchies, the world will never see her like again. She was a worthy sovereign and a great lady."

On that visit, I remember, the Emperor tried particularly hard to make friends with Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener. To some considerable extent, he succeeded; "Bobs" was always willing to make friends, and even Kitchener's coldness thawed remarkably before a man who was certainly a soldier above all else. Another of the war-time *canards* was that this effort at friendliness was dictated by reasons of policy, and that the Kaiser expected to gain military secrets by it. That, of course, is

ridiculous ; the attraction was simply that of one great general to others of different race and methods.

Moving to and fro in England, the Emperor wore whenever possible the uniform of a field marshal, to which he was, of course, entitled ; and he was very frequently with Lord Roberts. He had already decorated our Commander-in-Chief with the Order of the Black Eagle, the most highly prized of all German decorations. That brought him fierce criticism in Germany ; but he knew how to ignore such shafts.

The Kaiser undoubtedly had a high admiration for any soldier who did his duty, as this case shows. For Lord Roberts at that time was constantly warning England of the danger of a future war with Germany, and was supporting with all his power the scheme for perfecting a Territorial army. But the Emperor could appreciate loyalty and courage even in an avowed enemy.

"I go my way without heeding the conventions and fancies of the day," said the Emperor once, at a famous speech that caused yet more trouble for him at home. But he did it—to the very end.

I found him much more decisive and determined than any other European monarch with whom I have ever had to deal. To me, he was always considerate and courteous, though he was occasionally short-spoken to members of his own suite. Yet they obviously adored him with a personal admiration that could forgive anything, and had in it more than a touch of fanaticism. The German is built that way ; Hitler obtains something of the same worship today.

The Kaiser was quick, impulsive, and eager, tremendously interested in everything he saw, full of vigour, and for ever seeking innovations which he could later

adapt and institute in his own land. Despite one or two ticklish moments, he caused me no real embarrassment during his visit.

He seemed much interested in the struggles of English aeronautics in those very early days of flight. Zeppelins were already flying regular mail and passenger services in Germany, largely because of the Kaiser's personal encouragement, though at that time we in England still regarded flying as something between a joke and a bad way of committing suicide. I did myself; but I learned more about it during the Emperor's stay.

That was two years after Bleriot had flown the Channel, and Grahame-White and he had founded flying-schools at Hendon, where some of our most famous pilots of latter years were then being trained. The Kaiser went two or three times to watch the flying at Hendon, in the queer box-kite aeroplanes of those days, and I had to accompany him.

He asked endless questions, made constant comments that showed that he was as conversant with this subject as with all others, and was for ever turning to one of his staff to order that a note should be made of some point which he wished to have investigated. I believe he met Hamel at Hendon—the famous "ace" with the German name who demonstrated looping the loop before the Royal Family at Windsor, and who disappeared mysteriously just before the outbreak of war—it was said by some that he went to Germany to offer his flying services there, though this seems merely a legend.

Owing to the indiscretion of some German officers, the attention of the authorities was directed towards the activities of certain German visitors to England, with one of whom I later had an adventure. This man, who

passed under the name of "Captain Grant", subsequently started making some inquiries in Portsmouth concerning the coaling of our battleships there, the numbers of naval men in the dockyard, and similar points which would not have been sought by any loyal Britisher.

Grant was out fishing, in company with his landlady's pretty daughter, when I called at his Portsmouth lodging. I had a look at his room, and found there a big-scale map of Portsmouth Dockyard, a loaded automatic, and some letters in German. These letters puzzled me the more I read them, for I am familiar with German, and the style seemed rather strained and clumsy. Finally, I copied the letters and went away to puzzle over them, and to make some inquiries from "Records" at the Yard.

Next morning, having puzzled out the cipher in which the "letters" had been written, and also discovered from headquarters that "Grant" was really a German merchant captain, Heinrich Grosse, who had been convicted long before in Singapore for forgery, I went along and arrested him on an espionage charge. For the "letters", when deciphered, bore very important information about our naval activities.

There was a scene when his landlady's daughter found how he had deceived everyone. Grosse was tried at Portsmouth Town Hall, and, on the evidence of Inspector Percy Savage, Sergeant Simpkins of the Dockyard Police, and myself, was found guilty, and later, at Winchester Assizes, was sentenced to three years' penal servitude. He was still in custody when the war started, and died before it ended.

While the Kaiser was in England, he attended one

or two race-meetings, and at one of them he witnessed an incident that obviously astonished him, probably because it was so different from anything in his own undemocratic country. He had been talking to Lord Lonsdale, but had turned away for a moment to say something to one of his suite, Lord Lonsdale meanwhile resuming one of those enormous cigars for which he is famous.

There was a momentary lull in the excitement of the racing, and in our little group near the person of the Emperor there was silence, except for his own quick, eager tones. The silence was suddenly cut by the raucous voice of a handsome Cockney girl who was passing near with her smartly dressed "beau".

"Lor lumme !" she exclaimed, never dreaming that her words would carry to us. "Look at 'is smoke, Alf ! Ever sin anythink like that, nah ? Wy don't *chew* smoke somethink classy like that ?"

The Kaiser turned sharply about, his brows drawn down and his moustaches bristling, but realized at once that it was not his cigar that had been referred to. He waited to see what form of punishment would be administered to this ill-mannered wench ; in fact, I had an uncomfortable suspicion that he looked expectantly at me, as being the only policeman present, and I took care not to glance his way. I need not have troubled myself.

"You shall have one if you think you can tackle it," called England's foremost sporting peer good-humouredly. And he pulled out his case, selected a huge cigar, and tossed it down. The man was far too embarrassed to do anything ; but the girl, with a flash of marvellous teeth in an answering smile, caught it as neatly as any cricketer could have done.

The two passed on out of sight, but the incident had been seen, and the crowd near by set up such a thunder of cheering for Lord Lonsdale as must have warmed his heart to hear. It certainly surprised the Emperor. He stood there not knowing whether to comment or let it pass. He decided on silence in the end ; but I always had the idea that he would have preferred a more severe and Germanic method of dealing with the unintentional commentator.

On this visit to England the Kaiser brought with him his Kaiserin and his only daughter, Princess Victoria Louise of Prussia, of whom he was very fond. I was detailed to accompany the Princess whenever she travelled abroad in England, and found her a most charming and considerate person. She was also wonderfully popular with British crowds, for there was a rumour abroad at the time that there was a possibility that she would become affianced to a certain person here, and in addition her modesty and friendliness were apparent to everyone.

I remember accompanying her on one occasion to St. Paul's, where she attended service. As she left the cathedral, the congregation suddenly poured out after her, and had to be restrained by the vergers from crowding too closely upon her.

While she was descending the steps outside, towards her car, a crowd which had assembled to see her emerge started tremendous cheering. The cheering was taken up by the congregation still in the doors of the cathedral, and we were ringed in by waves of acclaiming sound.

At that moment a pigeon, startled, I suppose, by the noise, came swiftly circling down above our heads, and went straight to the Princess's shoulder, where it settled,

apparently only too thankful to have found a place where it could remain for a moment undisturbed. She stroked it gently, and it half rose on its wings, and then went wheeling upwards again, while the Princess entered the waiting car.

The crowd was delighted at the incident, and fresh cheering began that lasted as long as we were within earshot, while the Princess's name was freely coupled with that of a certain royal person. Had the popular imagination been right, and the Kaiser's only daughter and favourite child married that person, it is quite on the cards that there would have been no Great War. But the fates had ruled that the Princess should marry the Duke of Cumberland, amid great rejoicings, a year or so later; and our own King and Queen, the Tsar and other notables, went to Germany to attend the wedding.

On one occasion when I was in attendance on Her Imperial Highness, she went shopping in London, unostentatiously as was her wont, and her lack of royal pretensions gave a very self-confident young shop-assistant a bad quarter of an hour.

She entered the establishment in question, attended by two of her ladies-in-waiting, and went to a counter where an assistant was serving; the proprietor of the shop was out at the time, and the young man behind the counter obviously fancied himself and his powers over the fair sex. He was of the type known before the war as a "masher"; and he had no idea who his quiet little customer was.

After leaning confidentially forward to hear her requests, he gave her what he fondly imagined was an all-conquering smile, made one or two comments about

the weather and recent racing to which she listened patiently, and then produced some silks for her inspection. To the indignation of the ladies-in-waiting, he was ardent in his recommendations of colours and shades, tried to make great play with his eyes, and would probably have gone to lengths which would have brought him a very severe rebuke (for the Princess, though rather shy, was not an Imperial Highness for nothing), when the proprietor of the shop entered from somewhere in the back regions.

I guessed instantly, from his empurpled face, that he had realized, perhaps by seeing the royal car outside, that this customer in the simple white frock was from Buckingham Palace. He coughed so sepulchrally that even the infatuated assistant looked sharply up, and one of the Princess's ladies, who had not seen him enter, almost jumped out of her skin—I think she began to have a very bad idea of English shops !

The assistant realized from terrific danger-signals in dumb-show that something was seriously amiss, and he instantly sobered down, became an automaton, served Her Imperial Highness with celerity and precision, and bowed her from the shop, while the proprietor held open the door for her.

Immediately she was gone he turned on his assistant. I had not guessed till that moment that he was a German by birth—the name above the shop was that of a trading company. But the crackling string of Fatherland oaths, chokingly muttered to keep them from carrying outside the shop, soon settled the point of his nationality. The assistant did not understand them, but he seemed to get the drift all right. Then the proprietor switched off from German into English that was far more forcible

than lucid. Once more, however, it conveyed its meaning. I have never seen a "masher" so suddenly deflated in my life ; and really, if he was so excessively charming to all the ladies who called in his master's absence, he deserved at least a little of what he got !

I had to leave the premises before the oratorical efforts of the German proprietor had got properly under way—he was still choking and swallowing. I wondered as we drove away what the assistant would feel like when it had all ended. I have often thought of him since !

Before the Kaiser left these shores for the last time before the war, he presented me with the Order of the Red Eagle of Prussia. Some sovereigns offer minor decorations indiscriminately—I shall have some stories to tell in that connection later on. But the Red Eagle is one which has never lightly been awarded, and it is very highly prized by all who receive it. I have the insignia of it still.

Truth to tell, I was in some ways not entirely sorry to see the special train bearing the Imperial family of Germany safely out of my ken. They had been very kind and thoughtful towards myself, whenever my duties impinged on their notice, but I had a feeling all the time that the Kaiser had it in him to cause great difficulties and embarrassments to his detective staff if one of his impulsive whims ever ran contrary to the fixed lines of our duty. His own will was always paramount ; had I, in the interests of my duty and perhaps of his own safety, found it necessary at any time to cross that imperious will I might, though no fault of my own, have brought on my head a severe reprimand from the man I was supposed to guard, and possibly an echo of an even

worse character might have reached me later if he had complained to my superiors at the Yard.

However, everything went off smoothly, and one of the most interesting and striking of all my royal charges left England as well disposed towards me as I was towards him. Possibly a contributory reason was that I was careful never to let my eyes turn towards his left arm. The Emperor was extraordinarily sensitive about it, for it was almost useless to him ; and he never forgave anyone who had the bad taste to appear to notice the defect.

It was a very human trait ; but then my experience has always gone to show that kings are very human after all.

I never saw the Kaiser again, though once, during the war, I heard from him, so to speak, at second-hand. At the time, I was engaged on anti-espionage work in England. One of the spies whom I arrested had been carrying on correspondence with an address in Holland, through which his news filtered to Germany. I suggested in the right quarters that I could imitate his hand-writing sufficiently well to continue this correspondence after his execution at the Tower, passing on misleading information which, if believed in Germany, would assist the Allied cause.

With the blessing of the military authorities here, I actually put this plan into operation. Money was sent in return for my "news", which payments were absorbed into the supplies which financed our anti-espionage work at the time. The information I sent, though carefully falsified, looked on the surface to be so helpful to Germany that I received from Holland several carefully veiled intimations that my work was approved "in the

highest quarters", and finally I was told that "our august Leader" was considering awarding me the "highest decoration for valour"—apparently the Iron Cross.

It was, of course, impossible for an Iron Cross to be sent through the post during war-time, so, to my everlasting regret, I never received this decoration to put with my others on my study wall. My correspondence, anyway, came to an abrupt end shortly after, since I fancy Germany began to find that the information I was giving led them into some nasty errors of calculation.

When the war ended, my personal thankfulness for the British victory was tempered by considerable regret that the Kaiser, whom I had known and liked, and who, had destiny been kinder, might well have gone down to history as one of the greatest and wisest rulers of the twentieth century, was now swept from his throne into shabby-genteel retirement at Doorn, to watch the country he had fearlessly tried to lead sink into successive eras of poverty, misrule, and national hysteria.

Wars are terrible to nations, and they are also very cruel to kings.

CHAPTER XIV

A visit to Belgium—Aboard the *Victoria and Albert*—Meeting the present King of the Belgians—Burgomaster Max meets Their Majesties—A memory of Cardinal Mercier—The King and Queen in Flanders fields—In a Belgian antique-shop—Two presentations.

ALTHOUGH, in strict chronological order, the story of my visit to Belgium as detective guard to Their Majesties after the war does not enter my story till later, I think it may be of more interest here, immediately following the chapter about the Kaiser, since it shows in some detail the character of King Albert of the Belgians, whose firm stand against German aggression in 1914 was the root cause of England's entry into the war.

A greater contrast to the Kaiser's personality could not be imagined. William II of Germany was a soldier and an autocrat above all things. It was significant that his first act on coming to the throne was to issue an address to the Army and Navy—his address to his people followed three days later.

"The soldier and the Army, not parliamentary majorities, have welded together the German Empire," he announced. "The Army is the true basis of the throne."

In pre-war Germany, all civilians, men, women, and

children, were obliged to step off the pavement into the road when passing a soldier, or else suffer the indignity of a push, a stroke with a cane, or a leer. The soldier was exalted above all, and at the pinnacle of the Army stood the Kaiser himself.

King Albert, as I saw him, was a very different sort of man. At that time, in 1922, he had not so long before concluded a brilliant and dogged campaign against the Kaiser, in which he had clung with bulldog tenacity to the last strip of Belgian soil that was left him; nor could the finest generals of Prussia or the most terrible onslaughts of their men drive him forth.

Yet he was not marked as one of the world's great captains. Tall, quiet, studious, his glasses giving him a slightly peering manner, he looked like a univeristy professor. No one would have suspected this mild man of being, for instance, one of the finest and most daring mountaineers of his age, or of having the splendid physique necessary to stay, as he did through the four years of war, in the trenches among his troops, sharing their hardships and encouraging them in their stubborn defence.

Of all the figures in the world of Royalty that might have been anticipated as the rock on which the waves of German power would break, this man seemed to me the most unlikely.

It was a perfect May morning in 1922 when King George and Queen Mary, attended by a small suite, left Buckingham Palace for this Belgian visit, and motored to Victoria Station, where the early business crowds were already pouring through on the way to their day's work. A little group of clerks and typists and some idlers recognized the royal party, and gathered to cheer as

they were met on the station by Earl Beatty, Earl Haig, and Sir Frederick Ponsonby, who were to accompany them to Belgium.

Leaving the special train at Dover, and passing through a guard of honour drawn up on the jetty, we went aboard the royal yacht *Victoria and Albert*. Dover Castle thundered out a farewell salute of guns, an escort of destroyers closed in round us like a pack of guardian wolfhounds, and we steamed away into the trembling blue of the morning towards Calais.

On board the royal yacht, the King and Queen always mingle quite freely with the staff and the crew. Never heavily conventional, they always seem more happy and at home on the water than in any other place. It is one of the distinguishing marks of our own Royal Family that they can talk delightfully and intimately with their servants and sailors without the slightest suspicion either of condescension or of *lèse majesté*.

It makes the task of serving them a wonderfully pleasant one—which does not, in my experience, apply to all Royalties.

At Calais, Their Majesties were received by the Prefect and a body of other officials, and escorted on to the special train that was to convey us to Brussels. Three hours later I noticed the speed of the train diminishing, and we drew into Enghien station, where a group of men in brilliant dress-uniforms waited on the platform.

From among them stepped forward a tall, stern-faced young man of twenty—Leopold, Duke of Brabant and heir to the Belgian throne, to which he has since ascended. He received Their Majesties on behalf of his parents, welcoming them in a few brief, soldierly words to Belgian soil which their armies had so largely

preserved from conquest at the hands of the Kaiser's invading troops.

I was intrigued by the personality of this young man. He was not thirteen when the war broke out and his father threw down the gauntlet to the German Emperor, and when the Armistice was signed he was barely seventeen. Yet for the last two years of the war he lived the life of a simple soldier in the 12th Belgian Regiment, getting the same rations as the rest of the troopers, exposed like them to all the perils of death and disease that congregated round the front-line trenches, hungry and thirsty when shell-fire delayed the food transports, seeing his comrades blown to pieces at his side, using his rifle against his country's foe, with no privileges or comforts beyond those of a common ranker.

Such terrible experiences could not fail to leave a mark on any boy of that age, much less on a gently nurtured prince. War erased youthfulness and replaced it with stern assurance, soldierly brevity, and—above all—a dread first-hand knowledge that battle, while it may bring glory, infinitely outweighs it with misery for an invaded nation. It was a harsh training, but if more princes had it there would be less wars.

The Prince presented to Their Majesties at Enghien certain distinguished Belgian officers who were to be attached to their suite during the period of the visit. The proceedings went through with military precision and swiftness. Five minutes after we had stopped beside the platform, the special train was pulling out again towards Brussels.

You could hear the cheering of the crowds about the Gare du Nord station while the train was still a hundred

yards or more from the platform. You could hear it above the puff of the engine, above the grind of brakes, above the rattle of the train, like breakers crashing with increasing swiftness and force on to a rocky shore. Brussels had not forgotten how generously the Flanders fields had been enriched with British blood.

The King and Queen of the Belgians were waiting on the platform to receive Their Majesties—that Belgian Queen, daughter of a German duke, who had served her new country in the war no less faithfully than had her husband, for, while he led his armies, she worked day and night as a Red Cross nurse, exposed to infection and sometimes to German bombs in an ordinary field-hospital.

When the two Kings met at the Gare du Nord, the cheering grew deafening, so that there was considerable difficulty in making a number of formal presentations of the members of the British suite to their new royal hosts. Finally, Their Majesties and the Belgian royal couple entered a car, and we drove off towards the Palace through streets lined with troops. The progress was marked with one unceasing cheer, so that it was a very considerable relief to the ears to get inside a building again.

On the following day the King and Queen visited the famous Congo Museum in Brussels. It is a wonderful place. Immediately before his accession to the throne, King Albert had paid a personal visit to the Congo, which dominion had formerly been the cause of endless controversy. From this visit he brought back some remarkable trophies, both hunting and otherwise ; and, what was more to the point, he interested himself in certain Belgian colonial reforms which very greatly eased the Congo of its burden of former misrule.

One of my first tasks on arriving in Brussels was to place myself at the disposal of the Belgian detective authorities in the matter of co-operating with them to ensure the safety and comfort of our royal visitors to their country.

The Belgian police, ever since Sipido's effort in Brussels to shoot King Edward, have retained a sensitive memory about that incident, and have taken ample measures to see that nothing like it shall ever occur again. On the occasion of our 1922 visit, their task was a simple one. No one who had heard those crowds cheering as the King entered Brussels would have feared for his safety thereafter. An assassin would have been terrified to enter such a throng; in the main, assassins are a cowardly race.

Our duties, therefore, resolved themselves to the usual formalities of seeing that details of the royal party's movements were supplied in advance to the Belgian authorities, and co-operating with them in seeing that no disturbances could occur, and that the King and Queen were never out of reach of a detective attendant.

We arrived in Brussels on a Monday. On the following Wednesday Their Majesties paid a visit to the place where Nurse Cavell was executed before the rifles of a German firing-squad, at the order of General von Bissing.

The Queen went up to the place alone, and stood silent for a few minutes there. I think the story of this heroic Englishwoman, who died trying to serve her country just as bravely as any Tommy in the trenches, always touched some deep chord within her. She attended the special service in Westminster Abbey in memory of Nurse Cavell, and then also, I remember, she seemed

deeply grieved, as if the loss were a personal one to herself.

That same afternoon Their Majesties drove to the Hôtel de Ville, where they were received by the famous Burgomaster Max. He read an address of welcome to them, and afterwards chatted for a long time to the Queen.

She asked this magnificent man with the piercing eyes and indomitable courage many questions about the German occupation of Brussels. His modest description of his historic journey out of the city in August 1914 to meet in person the onrolling tide of invasion, to protest against some of the conditions threatened by the conquerors, and to demand more reasonable terms for his citizens, made an epic tale, though he repeated it only with reluctance.

Just before leaving, Her Majesty asked him whether he found the conditions very bad in the various German prisons to which his outspoken announcements later brought him. The old man drew himself up.

"I followed the advice I myself had already given to my compatriots," he said proudly: "I awaited patiently the hour of reparation, thinking only of that, living only for that. Now it has come, and the friends of my country—the deliverers of my country—can come again to us in peace and happiness."

On the Thursday and Friday, the King, attended by Earl Haig, Earl Beatty, and others of his staff, made a tour of the British graveyards in Belgium and Northern France. Seldom have I seen His Majesty look so stern and saddened.

Zeebrugge, Zonnebeke, Poperinghe, Ypres, Vimy, Arras, Bapaume, Courcelette Wood, Pozieres, Albert,

Etaples—the stocky figure in the sober service khaki of a British field marshal visited them all. In those days, less than four years after the war had ended, the names still awoke a wondering echo through the world. They were synonyms for great comradeship and deathless faith.

During our visit, you could see here and there the broken crosses, the blasted trees, and the rusty and twisted barbed wire that marked the places where the shadow armies lay resting beneath the poppy-flaunting fields.

Now the signs have gone, the names are forgotten, and the world is girding itself anew. Below the busy murmur of our heedless, flimsy civilization, there creeps nearer again the low mutter of guns. Man never learns.

It was obvious, as His Majesty passed from place to place, visualizing the sacrifice of those many millions of his subjects who had paid the supreme price for him, making of their bodies, here on foreign soil, a wall with which to shield our England, that grief and deep regret were flooding over his soul. He was very silent during those two days. If George V had the choosing of it, there would be no more war in this world. Despite his field marshal's rank, he is not a warlike man, and we, his people, may well be thankful.

On the Friday, His Majesty was received at Notre Dame de Lorette by Mareschal Foch, Generalissimo in supreme command, during the latter months of the war, of the French, English, and American armies on the Western Front. He gave me the impression of the typical scientific fighting man.

Short, of medium build, with hard eyes, a lined face, and big white moustaches, his uniform covered with

gold braid, stars, and decorations, he seemed like the personification of Victory as seen by some modernist artist. It was customary once to greet this man as the Saviour of Europe. To me, he just seemed like the man who had rung the bells of doom for the Kaiser whom I had also known.

After having talked for a short while with the Mareschal, His Majesty laid a wreath in the French cemetery at Notre Dame de Lorette, and then entered his car, and was driven on to Arras. He stayed longer than usual at Courcelette Wood, looking at the wooden crosses set up there to the memory of the Australian and Canadian troops who died there in their thousands. It was quite late in that sad evening when we finally returned to Brussels and the Palace.

During their visit, the King and Queen went to see Cardinal Mercier. The dignified and courageous protests of this great war-time figure against German harshness towards the populations of the occupied areas of Belgium brought him into constant conflict with the invading military authorities. His name became known all over the world at that time, the more since the Vatican was then supposed to be rather in favour of Germany than of the Allies.

The Cardinal, a grave and handsome silvery figure, showed Her Majesty over his wonderful cathedral, and talked with her for some time. As she was leaving she turned to me.

"If you think you can entrust our safety to other hands for a very little while, Mr. Fitch," she said, smiling, "I would like you to stay behind and receive from His Eminence a signed portrait of himself which he is presenting to me."

And so it happened that I had a short chat with the great churchman myself. He was keenly interested in my task of attending the Royal Family, and asked me many questions about them all.

He also asked me a number of questions about the state of civilians in England during the war—our food shortages, our morale, and, above all, for details of the great religious revival that took place here in those sombre years. He was surprised to learn how well organized our food-supplies were; and he spoke in terms of the highest admiration about the American missions to Belgium between 1914 and 1919.

"Without the splendid and generous assistance of America," he said, "our lot would have been a terribly hard one. That wonderful people poured out money like water, not at first in military measures that must necessarily destroy life, but in Christian charity and kindliness, feeding the starving, healing the sick, sheltering the homeless, and reuniting the scattered.

"Amid the terror and danger of warfare, the Americans went about carrying out Christ's behests towards the frightened and the needy with a courage and humility that could not have been surpassed."

He gave me the photograph for the Queen, and our talk reverted to her.

"It must be a wonderful privilege to serve that great lady," he said as we parted. "I have met many queens, but never one who left so deep an impression on my mind."

On the day before our return to England, Her Majesty was passing through a small Belgian town in her car when she noticed an antique-shop, the window of which keenly interested her, for, as I

have explained before, she is an ardent collector of antiques.

It was impossible to stop at the time, but at our journey's end that day she sent for me.

"Do you remember that little village about fifteen miles out of Brussels, where they had the stone cross in the market-place?" she asked.

"Your Majesty means Lembecq perhaps?" I suggested.

"That's it!" she exclaimed. "You are indeed a detective! Well, did you notice an antique-shop there, on the right, just after we had left the market-square?"

It happened that I had.

"Splendid!" she said. "Well, obtain me the name and address of that shop. I must visit it before we leave for home."

She did so next day. She purchased some wonderful lace there, as well as a little box of silver and ivory which is now one of the most treasured items in her splendid collection of such things.

There was one little incident during our visit to Brussels which mildly interested me at the time, but which came back with fatal sharpness a few years later.

On one of the days when Their Majesties were visiting places of interest in Brussels, King Albert and his son, the Duke of Brabant, went for a day's mountaineering somewhere near the capital. A palace official with whom I had got on rather good terms during our visit told me their destination, and shook his head doubtfully.

"His Majesty" (King Albert) "is afraid of nothing," he explained uneasily. "You know he fought in the trenches in the war, and took the same risks as the poorest

of his soldiers. His mountaineering is like that : where others can go, he also can go. Every time he goes out on these expeditions, the heart of the Palace stands still till his return. There is a prophecy here, made long ago by a gypsy, that one day he will meet his end among the mountains that he loves. But pouf ! His Majesty laughs whenever he hears it !"

I listened idly enough at the time, but the words came back to me as if they had just been spoken by someone at my elbow on that tragic Sunday evening when, sitting listening to the news over the wireless, I was shocked to hear how terribly that Brussels prophecy had come true, and that King Albert's body had been found at the foot of one of his own crags.

The fidelity and admiration of the Belgians for their King impressed itself on me very forcibly during my stay in Brussels. King Albert was not a monarch who stood on any unnecessary ceremony with those who surrounded his throne. He had the happy capacity of mixing freely with them and yet keeping their entire respect.

A brilliant engineer, he personally directed the flooding of an immense tract of country round the Yser during the war, thus narrowing his front so that the German masses could not gain any advantage from their numbers in attacking him. There he stood steadfast, after his Ministers had gone. Alone of all the kings and emperors, he *fought* in the war, with his son, and became the idol, the symbol, and the incarnation of his people. Can you wonder that they loved him ?

Just before we were due to leave Belgium in 1922, I was commanded to attend his presence. I found a quiet, unassuming man, with friendly tones and a remarkable

quality of real personal interest in me and my work. The King whose name had become known in the varied spheres of mechanics, flying, engineering, and war, who had flown over the German lines in an aeroplane, had patronized the poet Verhaeren and taken a personal interest in saving the sight of the famous painter Laermans, could ask shrewd questions on British detective work, and showed a knowledge of police activities in general not so very far short of my own.

Before I left him he did me a signal honour in creating me Officer of the Order of Leopold II. It was a very unexpected decoration, and one that I shall always prize very highly. Incidentally, the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs made out the Order to "Monsieur *Filch*"—a thing which has always amused me since!

After a crowded and intensely interesting week in Belgium, we joined the special train that was to convey Their Majesties and their suite to Boulogne, and on the Saturday afternoon, with the sun glinting golden over the rippling water, we went aboard the *Victoria and Albert* once more.

On the way over the Channel, Queen Mary sent for me, and in very kindly words expressed her satisfaction with my services during the Belgian visit. She then presented me with a handsome royal cipher pin in diamonds and rubies. It is perhaps the smallest of the several insignia with which I have been presented by various royal persons, but I treasure it high above all my foreign Orders.

My last memory of that journey is a very pleasant one. As we steamed into Dover harbour, the lean grey escorting destroyers closed in about us till I could have tossed a biscuit on to the deck of the flagship. Then, at

some signal, there came three thunderous cheers for Their Majesties from the brassy throats of the hundreds of enthusiastic, cap-waving bluejackets who swarmed all over the destroyers' decks and rigging.

As the echoes rocked over the dancing waves, a new sound drowned them—the crash of the royal salute from the guns of Dover Castle. It was a mighty welcome home again.

CHAPTER XV

Tsar of All the Russias—A trying time for Scotland Yard—The American "nihilist"—The urchin and the Emperor—Talking about Lenin—The Tsaritsa and her influence—The Grand Duke Boris in an accident—A Grand Ducal mistake.

Of almost all the Russians I have met—and they have not been few—the saying, "Scratch a Russian and you have a Tartar" has been true, with a single exception. That exception was Nicholas II, Tsar of all the Russias. Throughout his life it was manifest that it would have been better for him had he been a Tartar at heart. The day has not yet come for the lamb to lie down with the lion, much less to rule him.

I had always had a desire to see this greatest of all the world's autocrats, who had yet granted to his people bigger constitutional reforms than had any other living king ; this most peaceful of rulers who had let his country drift into the Russo-Japanese War ; he whose lack of forcefulness later permitted his Minister of War to declare full mobilization when he himself had expressly forbidden it, and so precipitated the Great War of 1914, which brought about his own shameful death and the end of his dynasty.

Of the many kings whom I have seen, the Tsar struck me as the best-intentioned and the weakest. Had he ruled a civilized, well-ordered State, his name would

have gone down to history as the glorious founder of wide reforms, the gentle guide of his people. But that such a man should be born to control the destinies of millions of half-savage Russians—the situation was more cruel than any devised in the deepest of Greek tragedies.

Quiet, reserved, friendly, with a kindly word for the least of us who served him on his English visit, yet the Tsar looked like a man with fear standing coldly for ever at his left side. I have always believed that he foresaw the vague outlines of his colossal failure and his eventual doom from the day he ascended the Russian throne. To me he seemed like a man walking quietly towards a waiting horror.

His advent into England, when I was appointed to see to his safety, was a trying one for the detective authorities. Pre-war Russia was in a perpetual ferment with anarchist and nihilist agitators. These men had two openly avowed principal objects—to hurl the Tsar from his throne, and murder him. They accomplished both in the end. It was for us to see that they accomplished neither in England.

In my ordinary work in the Special Branch, I had already enjoyed considerable experience against anarchist agents in this country (see my book *Traitors Within*). I knew their enterprise and pertinacity, and their fondness for obtaining a hold over an otherwise harmless drug-maniac and, by withholding further supplies of narcotic, maddening him into the readiness to commit an assassination.

When the Tsar's visit was foreshadowed, my first task was to check up on all known anarchist supporters in Great Britain and report on their activities. I had to see that none of them made suspicious moves in connec-

tion with the Tsar's advent ; to co-operate in closing the seaports to all suspicious aliens ; to study every inch of route over which the royal visitor might pass ; to supervise endless intricate arrangements to short-circuit possible dangers which might later threaten him.

The policeman is naturally at a disadvantage in such circumstances. He does not know who to suspect. Short of forbidding crowds to assemble along the route of a royal procession, he cannot infallibly prevent the possibility of someone appearing at the wrong moment with a revolver or a bomb. But he can do much to lessen the risk. The would-be assassin may feel that he is safe from detection amidst London's multitudes, but the chances are that the unsleeping eye of Scotland Yard will turn his way.

Railway lines are always liable to become joints in police armour as far as royal visitors are concerned, and at the time of the Tsar's visit I had to arrange for special precautions to be taken regarding them.

Around big junctions in particular, slum dwellings overlook the track, and in the warren of their interiors an anarchist might hide, hoping to throw a bomb from one of their multitudinous windows. Next time you approach a London terminus station by rail, take a look at the windows on either side of you. Then imagine yourself in the polished boots of the ex-Tsar of Russia, knowing that hundreds of revolutionary agents were willing to throw away their own lives if they could get a pot-shot at you with a bomb. Those slum windows take on a different aspect then !

The greatest care was taken that proper inquiries should be made, and the chance of a bomb from any such place was reduced to an absolute minimum. Pilot

engines travelled in front of the royal train ; plain-clothes men mixed with the welcoming crowds ; information from a variety of sources was collected—sources some of which would astonish you if I were permitted to name them, which I am not.

By the time the Tsar set foot on English earth, most of the police work concerning his visit had already been done. Nothing seemed different in our sleepy land, but the chances of the ill-intentioned anarchist were by that time slender indeed. Minute inquiries had been made into the character of all the people who would come into contact with the Tsar's party ; maps and plans had been studied for possible danger-points ; and, despite it all, we had seen to it that all our circles of defence round the Russian guests were invisible to them and to everyone else.

It was somehow quite typical of England that the first person to penetrate our guard was a grubby little London urchin !

The Tsar had just arrived in London, and left the special train to enter his car. While he was sitting there waiting for certain members of his suite, an incredibly small guttersnipe—I am certain he was born to be a jockey—edged suddenly from behind the burly blue figure of a policeman, dragging an equally ragged little friend with him.

There he stood, quite unabashed, in the cleared space beside the royal car. He stared hard at the Tsar, turned, nudged his gaping accomplice, and whispered hoarsely : "That's the King !"

" 'Tain't !"

" 'Tis !"

" 'Tain't, I tell yer. It's the Shah o' Rooshia."

The first urchin was now thoroughly exasperated. He turned on his companion, and regarded him witheringly, as only Cockney children can.

"I'll show yer, then !" he hissed.

Before anyone could stop him, he had run like quicksilver up to the long, gleaming car. Pulling his forelock, he called in through the open window, while his bright little eyes went darting to and fro seeking for possible interrupters : "You're the King, ain't you, Your Majesty !"

It was an assertion, not a question. The Tsar leaned smiling from the window.

"No ; I am the Tsar," he said kindly. "But your King is my pattern, little boy. Perhaps that is what caused your mistake."

The child had never expected an answer. He was horribly overcome with shyness and affright. His eyes went round, and he gasped.

"Thank you, Your Majesty !" he muttered, pulling his forelock again. Then he turned and vanished like a weasel ; his friend had disappeared long ago.

The Tsar smiled again as he saw the urchin run clattering down a side-street, whence he had come. But his suite looked on incredulously. Judging from what I have heard of the pre-war Russian police, any child who had attempted such a desperate venture there would have been almost beaten to death.

I tell this story because it gives a good indication of what His Majesty's brother sovereigns thought about him, and doubtless still think about him—those whom the war has left. As a matter of fact, it was well known that the Tsar used in many ways literally to copy our King, even to some extent modelling the cut of his

beard after him, and in his preference for naval uniform.

Writing of the extraordinary precautions we took to safeguard the Tsar's person against injury from nihilists, I am reminded of a rather laughable incident that occurred in that connection.

A certain member of the Tsar's staff who had accompanied him over here seemed, from the first, to distrust our arrangements. I assured him that everything necessary had been done, but he was not impressed. I fancy he expected a lot more ostentation about our police methods, and would have preferred to see squadrons of mounted police, equipped with swords or rifles, rather than the few stolid constables who, to his inexperienced eyes, represented the total forces of law and order in the midst of London's teeming millions.

He began to play the amateur detective on his own ! I am sure he was actuated simply by his evident sincere loyalty to his royal master, but he became rather a nuisance to us in some ways.

For one thing, his English was a language that occurred in no dictionary, and really I almost think we found him easier to understand when he relapsed into pure Russian. At least his tones and gestures were clear then !

It happened, however, one day, that an embarrassed policeman came hurrying up to me as I came on duty, and explained that His Excellency had more or less arrested someone on his own responsibility, and was anxious to give him in custody. When I asked why the constable had not taken the arrested man away to the station, he explained with some confusion that he could not understand what the charge against the "prisoner" was.

I went into the room where His Excellency was waiting, to try to discover the cause of all the trouble. Immediately I arrived, I was assailed by two indignant voices, one the high Russian sing-song of the Tsar's follower, the other the richly curt twang of what was most evidently an American business man.

After some expostulation, I managed to get first His Excellency's story and then—separately !—that of the detained citizen of the United States, who, by the way, had cause to complain, for no one had the slightest right to keep him there under the circumstances. I will give you both versions as I received them, though the first is translated somewhat from the Slav original.

"This person came to me to seek an audience with the Emperor. I questioned him, and he became confused in his replies. I saw him referring to secret written matter, undoubtedly instructions on how to make an attempt on the person of the Emperor. When I accused him, he thrust the instructions of his rascally superiors into his mouth, and began to masticate them, meaning to swallow the evidence against himself. He did that after I sent the police for you. *See !*"

The American moved what was undoubtedly his chewing-gum from one side of his mouth to the other. He had gathered the drift of the accusations against him, and before I could stop him he produced the sticky colourless mass and held it out for my inspection.

"I'm here about the Russian petroleum wells," he said, giving me a name that even I knew, though it is not part of my job to keep abreast of foreign business developments. "I'm an engineer, as possibly you know. I want to see the Tsar with my plans. No one else will

KING ALFONSO AND QUEEN ENA OF SPAIN

(*Left to right*): PRINCE JOHN, PRINCE OLAV OF NORWAY, PRINCE GEORGE (DUKE OF KENT)

do. But this feller here seems to think I'm out to do a murder."

I managed to smooth affairs over, smuggle the American from the room, and later to contrive indirectly that his wish was granted. From that, I was told later, big changes came about in the Russian petroleum business.

After he had gone I stayed a little to try to soothe His Excellency's ruffled feelings ; and indeed I could not help admiring his courage in imprisoning in his own room a man whom he honestly thought had some lethal weapon in his pocket, and had come intending to use it on the Tsar.

I quieted him in the end, and chatted more or less reasonably to him, making wild guesses as to the meaning of his replies. Finally he said : "If only that silly man had spoken proper English, this *contretemps* would never have arisen. But what can you expect from an American ?"

It took me, as usual, a minute or more to think out exactly what he meant by his amazing jumble of words, and then I fear I smiled. But he thought it a smile of agreement with his views, and we parted excellent friends.

Once, during my period of attendance on him, the Tsar asked me to tell him the tale of my meetings with Lenin in London. I explained that I had been in that strange man's presence twice, but one could hardly call those affairs meetings.

On the first occasion, Lenin, Trotsky, and other conspirators met in an Islington public-house, secretly, in a room guarded by a villainous-looking member of the fraternity, all of whom were international outlaws

bent on the destruction of civilized law and order. I had hidden in the room before their arrival, in a nailed-up cupboard in the wall, and for over an hour I crouched there in the darkness taking shorthand verbatim reports of the speeches of the leaders. Later, when they had gone, I took my reports to the Yard. I was chosen for this task because of my knowledge of Russian, German, and other languages.

At a second meeting of the conspirators I disguised myself as a waiter, and assisted at a secret dinner-party of the "Friends of Liberty". That time, by my clumsiness, I managed to knock down some copies of the agenda of the meeting, and in picking them up retained one in my napkin.

Lenin cursed me for my clumsiness as sharply as any bloated aristocrat. Actually I was very proud at having carried out this little sleight-of-hand under the eyes of men who had for years been tricking the Tsar's secret police.

It was as a direct result of these London discussions that the great Russian revolution of 1905 took place, when Russia was cut off from the world for two weeks. Mutinies occurred in her Army and Navy, citizen armies held some of the big towns, and the Tsarist régime rocked to its foundations.

I was told later that information and warnings from Scotland Yard made it possible then for the Russian police to quell the disturbances and postpone the success of the Bolshevik revolution for another decade or so. At any rate, one of the men at the Islington public-house meeting led a mutiny in the 1905 affair aboard a great Russian battleship, the *Potemkin*, and held the vessel for some time against the authorities.

The Tsar listened to my accounts with close and melancholy attention, and cross-questioned me endlessly about the personality and aims of Lenin, Trotsky, Maxim Gorky, and others who were present at the meetings. He asked me if I thought Lenin was a danger or only a talker, and I said that he was certainly a leader with a dangerous power of eloquence and personality.

The Tsar asked me also about Litvinoff, now Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs. At the time I knew little about him, but I had the experience of arresting him later, in England, during the war.

"I wish you were in *my* police service, M. Fitch," said the Emperor at last. "My police are much harsher than you in England, yet how much do they achieve? Yet you seem to have the measure of these revolutionaries."

There followed an awkward little pause. A word then, had I spoken it in answer to that tacit invitation, would, I am certain, have won me a high post in the Russian police service. I was duly grateful, but I preferred Scotland Yard to the Russian régime, where, it seemed, every police officer was expected to spy upon his fellows, and the biggest bribe was always the final factor. So I made no reply, and, with a tired sigh, the Tsar spoke of something else.

During that visit the Tsar suffered for some considerable period from a severe cold. It was not at all dangerous, but very troublesome, and he complained bitterly that England was "too warm" for him. He said he never got colds in Russian winters, and felt aggrieved that he should have caught one in the English summer. He did not know what English summers can do!

The Empress Alix of Russia was possessed of a

charming personality, but possibly it would have been better for the Tsar, himself inclined to be over gentle, had he married someone whose will-power approximated more closely to that of the great Catherine, or some of the other famous tsaritsas of the past. For undoubtedly the Empress was easily swayed, especially by religious charlatans, and it is now a matter of history how, by falling under the influence of a succession of such men, she contributed her part to the downfall of the Romanov dynasty and the tragic end of her own family.

In latter years I have seen a tragic photograph of the Tsar Nicholas II. I remember him in England in the magnificent uniform of a field marshal, applauded by the mob, surrounded by a scintillating crowd of staff-officers, and talking intimately to our own King and Queen. In the photograph he is shown, grimed and bearded, wearing the dirty crumpled uniform of a Russian private, and in his hands he holds a shovelful of snow.

Beside it is another photograph, of the Tsaritsa and her children huddled against a wall, their ragged and filthy black clothes such as would disgrace a peasant woman, their faces pinched and wan. Those photographs were taken during the captivity of the Russian Royal Family in the hands of the Bolsheviks, a little while before that black night when they were murdered and their bodies flung into a pit. The expression on all the faces in the two pictures is terrible beyond words.

I find it hard to realize that the guests of our King, the fêted visitors to Buckingham Palace whom I had to guard before the war, are dead in that fashion, and that Lenin and Trotsky, the fugitives whom I helped to

hound out of London, virtually took their places on the twin thrones of Russia. It is against such complete reversals of position that the royal detective ceaselessly works.

One of the royal persons of whom I retain a vivid memory is the Grand Duke Boris of Russia. He was a splendid figure of a man, as assured and autocratic as the Tsar was quiet and retiring. He was also a real Bohemian, and had numbers of friends in the West End of London, where he used to visit almost every day during his stay in England.

He was a member of the Garrick Club, in which all the most famous actors of the world assemble, and in those exclusive and somewhat eccentric portals he was always welcomed enthusiastically by the members. Sir Herbert Tree, familiar of many kings—among them Edward VII and the Kaiser—was one of the Grand Duke's warmest friends.

One evening, in the vestibule of the Garrick Club, the two men stood chatting before going their respective ways. Tree, with his generous gestures and quick wit, was in form that night, and was the cynosure of all eyes.

"If I were not a royal duke," laughed the Russian in candid admiration, "I would certainly like to be an actor. What a life is yours, my friend !"

"If I were a royal duke," repeated Tree gravely, "I would *become* an actor. For an actor can be a grand duke any night, with the aid of a cloak, a wig, and some grease-paint. And he takes only the glamour of the elevation, not its responsibilities. A grand duke, though, can be nothing else all his life, and his attendants and subjects never permit him to forget it. No ; give me the boards and not the crown. I'd rather hear the thunder of my

audience than the thunder of a fickle people any day !"

The Grand Duke was still smiling as he went to his waiting car. I followed, as was my usual practice, in another, and we passed through Admiralty Arch on the way to Buckingham Palace. We were travelling at a good speed, for it was late and the roads were fairly clear of traffic. But just outside the Palace the royal car ahead drove at high speed straight into the side of a taxi which had come suddenly into view from the direction of Birdcage Walk.

There was a tremendous crash and rending, and my own car, which had been following close behind, swerved aside to avoid being involved in the collision. I jumped out, fully expecting the Grand Duke to have been killed. By an absolute miracle, nobody had received anything worse than a shaking, though the Grand Duke's car looked as if it had been hit on the bonnet by Thor's hammer, and the taxi-cab was literally cut into two parts.

How the taxi-driver escaped with his life I cannot pretend to explain.

Escaped he had, however, and was now jumping about beside the petrol-smelling ruins and raging in extraordinarily unparliamentary language at the wrecking of his vehicle. I stepped up to him, explained who it was involved in the accident, which had been unmistakably his own fault, and ordered him to moderate his language instantly. As a matter of fact he was very lucky not to have had to face a charge of manslaughter, with one of the King's guests as his victim !

He was still inclined to be aggressive, however. The accident had given him a nasty shock, which excused

him a good deal. But the Grand Duke settled the matter.

"See that he gets a new taxi-cab tomorrow morning, Mr. Fitch," he commanded briefly. "Go wherever you like, find the best one you can, have every latest refinement fitted, and have the bill sent to my secretary at Buckingham Palace. I take it that will satisfy him?"

Without waiting to hear the effect of his words, he got into my car, and said: "Drive on, please." I smiled at the sight of the astounded driver in the road behind us—he was so obviously seeing golden visions. I met him again next evening. In the interim, I had told him to see to getting the new taxi himself, since I knew no more of buying taxis than mangles—which another royal person had formerly commanded me to obtain. He had made a good job of the generous offer extended to him, and was sitting in a magnificently appointed vehicle in a most placid humour with the world.

"I wouldn't mind bein' cut in 'arf by that gent every night!" he announced cheerfully, when I asked him if he were quite satisfied. I fancy, by the way, he meant his cab, not himself. "Grand jooks is just about my mark. *And* I've 'ad I dunno 'ow many pints today from my pals for tellin' 'em the story!"

As a matter of fact, I think the sweeping generosity of the visitor was something of a mistake. It may have been coincidence, but in the next two days the Grand Ducal car had no less than three hairbreadth escapes from disaster with other taxis. In each case, the fault was entirely on the side of the taxi. One shot out from a side-turning in Buckingham Palace Road just under the bonnet of the on-coming car. Another almost met it head-

on. The third skidded within a couple of inches of it, in a shower of blinding rain. Only the uncanny driving skill of the royal chauffeur saved an accident in each case.

After that, without actually giving voice to my suspicions, I arranged for my own car to travel in *front* of the Grand Ducal one instead of behind, as it had formerly done. The chauffeur kept close to the tail of my vehicle, and in that way, whenever occasion arose, we paraded the streets until the royal visitor left England. The trick worked, the more perhaps because I ostentatiously took down taxi numbers now and then.

It may have been simply that I, as a detective, was overdoubtful of humanity. On the other hand, I obviously could not have one of the Royalties I was appointed to guard put to the expense of furnishing new taxis for a large part of London. To say nothing of the risk to my charge.

CHAPTER XVI

Royal visitors from the Peninsula—King Alfonso at Westminster Cathedral—A close shave at Charing Cross—Anarchist or accident?—Guarding Princess Ena's wedding-gifts—"Gate-crashing" a royal reception—The unlucky opal—Footprints outside a royal villa—More decorations.

Of our royal visitors from the Peninsula I have many memories. Some are amusing, some tragic, some—for me, at any rate—mildly exciting. But the best of them all is the first, and it is best because it is so appropriate to the land of guitars and serenades, roses and moonlight and love. For this is a memory of royal lovers. Cupid made the match and, for once in a way, policy nodded an approving head.

Alfonso XIII of Spain was nineteen years of age when he first came to England. A King, a courtier, splendidly attractive and impatient of the control of his grey-beard Ministers—on that visit he was seeking a holiday from the troubles of his turbulent kingdom. It had been hinted in Madrid that the lad should seek to strengthen old alliances by finding a German or Austrian consort. But King Alfonso threw up his handsome head and laughed. He would see the world, he would seek romance, but he would promise nothing.

Of all the royal persons I have served, he was the

most spontaneous and carefree. On his arrival in London he knew very little of our customs and etiquette, but his charming smile made up for everything.

Delighted with the warm welcome he received—and no one could have helped liking him—he tried to show his appreciation of all the things done for his comfort and amusement. With a lavish hand he began to distribute Spanish Orders of a minor sort to all and sundry. When this extended to some of the royal footmen at Buckingham Palace, King Edward decided to give his young guest a kindly word of advice.

One day a story went round the Palace that His Majesty had suggested to King Alfonso that five shillings would be a more suitable mark of appreciation in many cases ! I can well imagine the avuncular twinkle which probably accompanied the remark, and the boyish chuckle with which it would have been received, after the first moment of astonishment. From that day the indiscriminate giving of decorations ceased.

A great ball was given at Buckingham Palace in honour of the young visitor, and to it were invited much of the beauty and distinction of Britain. I shall always remember watching the endless stream of visitors arriving—men wearing the insignia of a hundred ancient and famous Orders, and women who must have given the Spanish lad a wonderful idea of the beauties of our cold northern land.

Carriage after carriage rolled over the cobbles, scarlet-and-gold uniforms wove a pattern among exquisite frocks, and it would have been less than human had not the British public, and perhaps some of the Palace visitors themselves, wondered romantically whether the Prince Charming from Spain would carry

back an English girl as his bride when he returned to his fair land overseas.

I happened to see Princess Ena, King Edward's niece, enter the Palace. Fair-haired and dreamy-eyed, she was evidently thinking of something far away. I wonder if a premonition had come to her that she would fall a victim to love at first sight that evening, amid the swish of silks and satins over the wonderful floor of the Buckingham Palace ball-room.

The young King Alfonso danced with her, and met her again next day, and the next. Spaniards are not laggard wooers ; and I think the young people settled their fate very quickly. This, at least, is certain : when King Alfonso returned reluctantly to Spain he had a wonderful white yacht built, but would not name it. At least, he would not name it completely. On the bows, in letters of gold, the word "Princess . . ." was inscribed at his order, space being left after it for a word of three letters. A few weeks later his formal proposal for alliance with the English Princess was accepted, and the name of the future Queen Ena of Spain was painted on the yacht.

England began to stir to the excitement of a forthcoming royal wedding. It could not be held in our own country, of course, but the contagion spread just the same. It is true that all the world loves a lover.

Wonderful wedding-presents began to pour into Kensington Palace. They were of a magnificence no longer seen in these poorer post-war years, and they came not only from England and Spain but from almost every country in Europe. I was instructed to guard these presents when they were displayed at Kensington, and

among them I could distinguish several historic pieces of jewellery.

The one which most attracted my attention was a gift from the King of Spain to his bride-to-be—a ring set with an exquisite winking opal. It was a piece of ancient craftsmanship, and the huge opal looked so exceedingly like a fiery eye that I used to glance at it occasionally and fancy with some amusement that it was watching me to see that I did my duty in guarding it and its fellow gifts !

This ring, I found, had a curious and notable history. I was told that it had originally been presented to Alfonso XII, the father of the young King who was to wed Princess Ena. It had been given as a wedding-present to the late monarch by a jealous former admirer, and he presented it to his bride. Not long afterwards, she became ill and died. He then gave it to his grandmother, who almost immediately sickened, and also died. It was then taken by the King's sister, the Infanta Maria, who died within a few days.

Alfonso XII was so stunned at this trail of tragedy that he wore the ring himself—and died within a month. After that, it was sent to a Spanish cardinal, who hung it in a famous chapel in the Peninsula till its royal owners should wish to reclaim it.

Alfonso XIII was one of the most practical and happy monarchs who ever lived. He gave no more account to the famous legend of the ring than I would have done myself. He retrieved it, wore it for some time himself without suffering any ill, and later presented it to his Princess. And indeed it was a kingly gift.

There are those in superstitious Spain who say that ill-fortune returned to the Royal Family with the sinister

opal ring. The roar of an exploding bomb shattered the triumphal cheering of the King of Spain's wedding-procession. The royal couple were not injured, by a miracle, but the horses drawing their coach were killed, and the blood of an officer riding alongside, who was almost blown to pieces, spattered Princess Ena's wedding-dress.

More recently, despite the wisdom with which the young couple ruled Spain, revolution drove them in exile from their kingdom, and they were thankful to escape with their lives. Sometimes I wonder where that winking opal has got to now. I have said that I am not superstitious ; but had I been the King of Spain, I would have considered sending it to the chief of the revolutionaries with my compliments and worst wishes !

On the first afternoon when I was on duty guarding Princess Ena's wedding-presents, I had an amusing adventure. I was suspected of trying to "gate-crash" my way into Kensington Palace !

I had taken up my position in the royal suite when I first went on duty, but the inner man makes demands, even on a detective, and in course of time another officer relieved me while I went off to tea. On my return I found two footmen whom I did not know installed at the doors, announcing visitors to Princess Ena and Princess Beatrice.

I whispered to the men that I was on duty, but I was in plain clothes, and the big fellows barred my way with suspicious looks and insisted on having my name. Assuming that they had been informed of my job there, I rapidly whispered . "Fitch", for the situation was becoming embarrassing.

With an air of giving me what I deserved, they

loudly announced : "Mr. Fitch !" at the same time closing towards me, obviously with the intention of attempting to remove me if I proved to be a "gate-crasher" !

Princess Beatrice saved the situation. She stepped forward with extended hand, her eyes twinkling, and welcomed me.

"I think we have met before, Mr. Fitch," she smiled while the footmen dropped back into their places very hurriedly, staring at each other with wide eyes.

The occasion of the King of Spain's visit to England was a busy one for me. Spanish anarchists had made one or two previous attempts on his life in his own country, and it was to be supposed that they would not willingly neglect the opportunity provided by his travels in the apparently little-guarded highways of sleepy England.

Consequently, I had to take extraordinary precautions to prevent trouble. A couple of swarthy-skinned agitators were arrested and put temporarily where they would not cause danger to themselves or anyone else ; inquiries were carried out in various towns, and roads and railways along which the Spanish King would pass were all scrutinized with considerable care. But, for all that, I had one exciting moment during His Catholic Majesty's stay.

One morning, just before midday, King Alfonso was driving along the Strand. His chauffeur was sitting at his side, for he preferred when possible to drive his own car, and he was an excellent and prudent driver. I was following in a taxi-cab, fifty yards behind.

As we were passing Villiers Street, a private car, travelling very fast, went straight at the royal car, emerging like a huge black torpedo from the side-

turning and appearing to make a fatal accident inevitable. By a dexterous turn of the wrist and a fierce acceleration that made the car jump forward like a spurred horse, His Majesty shot ahead and avoided the collision.

I saw the side of the offending saloon loom enormous before the nose of the taxi in which I was riding, heard a scream of brakes, and was flung violently among the cushions as my taxi swung madly across the road on to the pavement opposite Charing Cross Station. For twenty yards or more we went skidding along on the pavement.

I should think that was the only morning in this century when there did not happen to be a single person on that stretch of pavement, normally about the busiest in all London, and perhaps in the world. So we came eventually to an awkward stop, and I went back to have a word with the driver of the big black saloon that had so nearly rammed first the King's car and then my taxi.

The thought naturally passed through my mind that this might be a method of attempting harm to the King. Anarchists are sometimes careless of their own lives, and had this car collided with the royal one I think something very serious might have happened.

An arrest resulted, and at the subsequent police-court appearance a small fine was imposed, and some severe advice was given. It was particularly fortunate for the culprit, though he never knew it, that King Alfonso himself expressed a wish that no serious punishment should be awarded.

"All's well that ends well, Mr. Fitch," he said to me at the time. "I have had worse experiences ; these things are the drawback of being a king. Please don't let there be any further fuss."

The man who was most disappointed was my taxi-driver. He was a corpulent gentleman with a red face, and I imagine he had only recently exchanged the cabby's whip for the taxi-man's overalls. He knew he must not give vent to his feelings in the presence of the King, but he stood there gazing at the offending driver, his lips moving silently at intervals, and his face so congested with scarlet rage that I was really afraid he might have a stroke. It was the wicked waste of all the things he might have said that hurt him most, I fancy. He held them in nobly ; but I always hoped that King Alfonso was not a lip-reader !

One of the most impressive ceremonies to which I have ever accompanied any royal person took place during this visit of the King of Spain to London. It was a great event to English Catholics, this advent in our country of one who was then, I suppose, the greatest Catholic monarch in the world, and it seemed appropriate that he should visit the newly built Catholic Cathedral of Westminster, whose tall red spire commands such a wonderful view of surrounding London.

On a blue June morning, King Alfonso and his suite arrived at the great doors of the Cathedral, and found awaiting them there a gathering of churchmen whose robes far outshone in magnificence the dresses and uniforms of the sovereign and his staff. The Archbishop, his long train upborne by a wide-eyed choirboy, saluted His Majesty and sprinkled him with holy water, while the faint strains of the organ came stealing out from the cloistered dimness within.

As I watched the gorgeous procession pass statelily from the porch to the high altar, I felt profoundly affected by the atmosphere of the ceremony, the weaving

patterns of the robes, the sweet singing, the murmur of many feet, the smell of incense, and the rapt looks on the faces of everyone present. It is not often that one sees religion putting forth such a mighty and mystic spell in these matter-of-fact days.

On entering the sanctuary, every member of the great procession bowed first to the Cross, then to the King, and finally to the Archbishop. One recognized here the power that in past ages set the feet of popes on the necks of the world's greatest rulers.

Mass was solemnly celebrated, and the Kiss of Peace conveyed to the King. A woman sobbed somewhere behind me in the great Cathedral ; even I, who was there simply as a matter of duty, felt intensely moved. The singing and the fluting notes of the organ went softly on.

There was a shifting of the brilliant robes and trim uniforms, fresh groups took shape, and then the Archbishop read an address of loyalty to the King. Young and slender, hardly looking his nineteen years, the monarch's finely chiselled face seemed surrounded by a halo of light from within, called into being by his own emotion.

Before leaving the Cathedral, His Majesty was conducted to the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, surely one of the most exquisite examples of pious charity in the world. The King and his mother, and the nobles and grandees of Spain, had subscribed an immense amount for the erection of this Chapel, and wondrous gems and ornaments decorated its walls. It was a lovely sight, and the King was deeply moved, seeing it thus for the first time.

Finally the great procession reformed and wound

its way to the porch. Solemn farewell blessings were uttered, and we found ourselves once more in the sunlight of prosaic, dusty London, with its hurrying traffic and restless crowds. It seemed to me that we had stepped suddenly from the pomp and pageantry of the middle ages into the heart of the hard modern world ; and, in some indefinable way, the change was not pleasing.

I suppose, because of his youth and friendliness, King Alfonso received all sorts of queer requests for charity during his visit to England. I was told afterwards of some of the letters he received, and they contained some astounding requests. Apart from the usual horde of autograph-hunters and seekers after easy wealth, there was quite a number of curious people who seemed to think that the young royal visitor could assist them to obtain other strange desires.

One, for instance, was from a girl of eighteen who desperately wanted to be a suffragette, but who was under the control of an aunt, related to a certain English ducal family, who held most uncompromising views about women's freedom. The suggestion was that if only King Alfonso would publicly or by private letter express support of suffragette views, the dragon-aunt's opposition would be overcome, for she had apparently expressed the highest commendations of His Majesty's common sense.

A sequel to this occurred later. About five years after the Spanish King had returned to his own country, the name of the girl in question came very much to the fore as a hunger-striker suffragette, and she led a powerful section of that strange movement that eventually won votes for women. I cannot believe that King Alfonso was able to accede to her request, so

perhaps she eventually overcame Auntie all by herself! She is still alive today.

Perhaps the most surprising of all the requests the King received during his English visit was one that he was able to grant, and that caused quite important repercussions when he returned to Spain.

An old woman, dark and wrinkled by the weather and wearing tattered rags, was brought to me one morning, and explained in voluble Spanish, of which language I fortunately had a good knowledge, that she must see the King. I pointed out as gently as possible that she could not do that, and ran a risk of being arrested if she continued to make herself a trouble to the authorities, as she had been doing.

She then poured out an amazing tale. Two years before, she and her husband had owned a little hillside farm in Andalusia. They kept a few goats and chickens, and were very happy. Then, without warning, they were told that the hillside had been found to belong to a neighbouring landowner. They were turned off it neck and crop, and their livestock seized. Complaints to the magistrate only brought them shrugs and pity—and the mention of a name great in the councils of the King.

Starved and crazed, they set out to walk to Madrid, to tell the King himself their wrongs. The husband died of exhaustion and illness on the way, but the old creature before me kept on to the capital. The King was not there, but the Minister whose name had been mentioned got to hear of the complaint, and sent a valet of his own to interview this dogged claimant. As a result, she was turned out of the little hostel where she was lodging in the capital, and told to make herself scarce.

Gossip said the King had come to England. With her

last *pesos* she bought a steerage passage on a dirty banana boat, and got to London. Two days before Alfonso was due to return to Spain, she got as far as my office, having been brought by a good-natured policeman, who did not want to charge the poor old thing with making a scene outside the Palace.

I could not help feeling stirred by the sincerity and tearful bitterness of the story. Flung out of the sunny Spanish province, badgered and threatened till she left the capital, she had followed her King thousands of miles, moved and inspired by the belief that if only he could hear, all would be set right. I arranged that she should write to His Majesty, and saw to it that the letter was delivered.

In the bustle of leaving England, the secretary who told me the story could only assure me that the King had read the ill-spelt missive, and that his youthful face had gone as black as thunder. But I heard later that the old woman, who had had some trouble through failing to register as an alien in England, had been rescued from her predicament by a member of King Alfonso's staff, who equipped her with money and saw to her passage back to Spain.

Beyond that, I was not able to trace the story accurately at first hand. But, whether by coincidence or not, the Minister who had tried to drive the old woman from Madrid was dismissed in ignominy immediately after the King's return. Alfonso, despite the charming nature which he showed to me and others in England, could at times be autocratic and unbending, and I fancy he did all he justly could to set right the wrong that had been done. Though not even he could restore the poor old woman's husband to life again.

Queen Ena, who was only eighteen when she married, received that same year from the Pope the treasured presentation of the Golden Rose. This ornament, made of wrought gold set with sapphires and other gems, represents a thorny branch with rose leaves and blooms upon it, and is given on the fourth Sunday in Lent of most years to some individual whom the Pope wishes especially to bless. It is very highly prized, and is not commonly given to royal persons but usually to distinguished churchmen or clerical communities. Probably it was presented to Queen Ena to bless her future as consort in what was then Europe's leading papal power. Now Catholicism and the Queen have left Spain together.

Before King Alfonso left England, he presented me with the highly prized Order of Isabella the Catholic, in token of his appreciation of my services in safeguarding his person. He was a man who was always very pleasant to serve, and when I heard of his subsequent loss of the throne of Spain and flight from the revolutionaries, it seemed to me that the Spanish people might well have jumped from an imaginary frying-pan into a very real furnace. Time will show whether I am right.

Another royal fugitive from the Peninsula with whom I had to do was King Manoel of Portugal. He was a very different type of man from Alfonso. Instead of light-hearted enterprise and cheery good nature, I found in him a perpetual fear of assassination and a gloomy dread of the future. He had cause enough, I suppose; his predecessor and the Crown Prince had both been murdered, and he himself had barely escaped with his life after two troubled years on a tottering throne.

He fled to England, that sanctuary of lost causes and

fearful kings, and I was given the job of looking after his safety. Accompanied by his mother and the Duke of Oporto, he took a splendid house in King's Road, at the top of Richmond Hill, and there led the life of a retired country gentleman. I wonder he chose *King's* Road—were I an ex-sovereign, I would have objected to that perpetual reminder of a lost state. He had different cares, however.

"If I were in any other country than England," he said to me mournfully one day, "I should lock myself in a room with shuttered windows, and live a life of solitary confinement. But here I believe the English police will keep me safe from assassins."

After the first fears had worn off, he used to attend race-meetings and theatres, but I doubt whether he was ever very comfortable or happy, and he frequently asked me if I were quite sure that the police had taken proper precautions.

One morning Queen Amelia was looking out through the door of the conservatory attached to the drawing-room of the Richmond house when she discovered some footprints on the soft mould of the flower-beds just outside the drawing-room window. The old terror of assassins was instantly revived. I was immediately called in, and the Queen explained what had happened.

"I am sure there were revolutionary agents lurking outside the drawing-room windows last night," she said in a frightened tone. "They have always said they will injure the King. Doubtless they were trying to force open the shutters and throw a bomb into the room."

I assured her that her fears were groundless, because I had the place well guarded, and no suspected person

could possibly have entered the grounds without being spotted by my men.

The shutters bore no sign of having been tampered with, but the King cancelled all his engagements for the day and remained shut in his room. Meanwhile, I placed boxes over the footprints to prevent them being obliterated, and made certain inquiries on my own, after having had a good look at the imprints in the soft earth.

It was not very long before I discovered, in the kitchens of the house, a shoe with some mud still sticking to the heel. On testing, it fitted one of the imprints exactly. The owner of the shoe was a young Portuguese footman, who was very scared at being asked what he was doing outside the drawing-room window the night before, and who was his companion at the time.

"If you please, *M. l'Inspecteur*," he stammered, "I and Toni . . . Well, we are in love, do you see, *M. l'Inspecteur*—in love with two of your so-sweet English girls. . . . Sometimes, when things are not so busy up above there, we creep out—so—and meet these so-sweet girls, and then . . ."

I thought we could safely leave what happened *then* unconfessed, so I told the man that was all I wanted to know for the present. I checked up his statements, and he admitted quite candidly that the reason why these two Romeos took the way across the flower-beds was to deaden the sounds of their footsteps lest they were heard from within : for they were not supposed to be out of the house at that time of night.

And so another mystery was cleared up, and found to be due to nothing more perilous than the charms of the lasses of Richmond Hill, whose fascination, history

records, had at least once before caused some royal perturbation, though that was certainly before my time as a King's detective !

King Manoel was immensely relieved when I tactfully explained things to him. He chuckled consumedly over my description of the footman's alarm when I taxed him with the "crime", and was much too pleased at the happy ending of the affair to reprimand the erring servants.

"We were young ourselves once, Inspector," he laughed good-humouredly, and left it at that.

I think this incident reassured the King ; at least, he used to go out in public much more freely after it. Always a keen race-goer, he once met with an amusing experience at Goodwood, where he loved to mix with the fashionable crowd and hear the latest society news, though he lived rather quietly himself.

He had been watching the racing through field-glasses, when an ultra-modern flapper of nineteen, accompanied by an escort apparently just down from Oxford and proud of it, though he was a good deal more effeminate than his companion, complained loudly that she could not see. Instantly King Manoel bowed and handed her his glasses.

Her escort took one glance at the King's face under the soft grey hat and began nudging the girl violently. The first time she only made a face, being interested in watching the horses, but next moment she turned on him and flung some horsy slang at him which made him wilt.

"I think perhaps he wished you to know who I am," suggested the King softly, because it was so very obvious that *was* what the young had meant.

PRINCE OLAV WITH HIS MOTHER, QUEEN MAUD OF NORWAY, DAUGHTER OF KING EDWARD VII

PRINCE OLAV OF NORWAY: AN AUTOGRAPHED PORTRAIT PRESENTED TO MR. FITCH

"Well, and who *are* you, anyway?" asked the girl loudly.

"Just a man who was once a king, my dear," was the quiet reply.

Something in the tone quelled the girl. She turned her artificial, rouged face to him and opened her mouth to begin some pert reply, but never finished it. She gave him back his glasses, murmured her thanks, and, taking her escort firmly by the arm, fled.

I have always been sorry for the youth. He looked so very much like a lamb being led knowingly to the slaughter, yet I fail to see how he could have been blamed for what had happened, or the gentle rebuke which the King's tone conveyed.

During my attendance on his person, King Manoel decorated me with the Order of Avis of Portugal. I found his service very pleasant and easy, and I have never quite understood how I came to deserve such recognition.

CHAPTER XVII

A modern Viking—King Haakon at Buckingham Palace—Queen Maud and women's suffrage—With the Princes at Appleton House—Prince Olav in London—An American memory—A queer incident at Harwich.

Of all the foreign royal families with whom in the course of my detective duties I have come in contact, I found the Norwegian royal house the most charming and considerate. Not that it is fair to call them foreign, for Queen Maud was King Edward's youngest and favourite daughter, and Prince Olav, the present heir to the throne of Norway, is thus half English by blood, and has a warm affection for England, with which he is well acquainted.

Haakon VII of Norway, as the King is now styled, was a Danish prince when he married, and had no direct expectations of a throne. Two years after his son Olav had been born, however, Norway, newly separated from Sweden, offered him its crown, which he accepted. A year later he and his English consort were crowned at Trondhjem, amid great rejoicing, in halls made famous by the Norse sagas of the ancient skalds.

The new King was of the traditional Viking type. Fair, strong, and fearless, he won instant favour with his subjects, and found the task of ruling in his progressive

northern dominion not so trying a work as usually lies before an elected monarch. After a short spell of rule, he was able to leave the care of his kingdom temporarily in the hands of able Ministers and come to England, bringing Queen Maud and her little son to visit King Edward at Buckingham Palace.

Both His Late Majesty and Queen Alexandra were delighted with their Norwegian grandson. The possessor of one of the sunniest smiles in the world, Prince Olav, at that age, could bring happiness anywhere ; and I think it is a gift he will never lose.

I remember a little incident that occurred during King Haakon's stay in London that gives an interesting sidelight into his character. He was walking along Regent Street one morning, accompanied by two or three gentlemen of his suite, when he saw an old man standing uncertainly on the pavement edge, apparently looking at the traffic hurrying up and down the street. I was a little behind the King, and before I or any of his attendants could guess what was going to happen, His Majesty had realized that the old man was blind and had stepped forward to help him.

Anyone would assist a blind man, of course ; but this particular specimen looked so dreadfully unkempt and verminous—a type seldom or never seen in these post-war days—that many people, and certainly most Royalties, would have shrunk involuntarily from contact with him. The King, however, put a firm hand on his arm and led him safely across the busy street.

"That old man tells me he has lost his dog," he said to me on his return. "The animal is not completely trained, and pulled its lead from his hand near here a few minutes ago. See if you can find it."

I began an instant search up and down the near-by pavements. They were very crowded with shoppers and loungers, and it took me nearly ten minutes before I luckily saw the little lost dog, trailing its lead along a side-street, and busily trying to sniff the scent of its master. I recovered it, took it back to the old beggar, who was waiting quietly on the far side of Regent Street, and then rejoined the King. He had waited patiently meanwhile, putting aside his own concerns until the blind man's dog was found. And I know he would have waited there half the day if necessary.

It is a poor commentary on human nature that the old beggar's first act on getting the lead in his hand again was to utter a stream of abuse that made the dog cringe, and then to seek for it clumsily with his feet, to land a kick in its ribs that would teach it never to break loose again. I cautioned him pretty sharply, and stopped him for the time being, but I don't know how long the truce lasted. Of gratitude, the old wretch showed no sign whatever.

A banquet was given at the Palace in King Haakon's honour, at which every course was appropriate to his country ; some of the delicacies were actually brought from there, and the feast ended with a wonderful arrangement of ices and fruits built up to represent a scene from one of the ancient sagas of the early Norse kings. Thor, Wodin, Freya, and Loke were cunningly represented amid ice caverns and snow palaces ; and I was told at the time that the most enthusiastic of all those who saw it was the little Prince Olav !

Queen Maud was a very popular figure in England during this visit. She had always been universally loved as a princess, and now a great measure of the same

esteem was extended by the British public to her husband. She became interested in the accounts of the women's suffrage claims in this country, and, I believe, studied the matter very thoroughly from all points of view. As I have previously mentioned, our Royal Family has always taken a progressive view of this matter.

Apparently Queen Maud's interest in the suffrage question was not limited to England, for Norway had the honour of being the first sovereign country in Europe to recognize that women had a reasonable claim to vote on matters concerning their own national future, and to give them full parliamentary suffrage, and Her Majesty seems to have been actively in favour of such a step—since followed by all the leading countries of the world.

During a later period, when I was attendant on Queen Maud, she sent for me one morning and presented me to little Prince Olav.

"I should like you to look after the Prince too, if you please, Mr. Fitch," she said. "You will take great care of him, won't you ? He is the only one I have got."

There was something so human and appealing about the way she said it that I have never forgotten the words.

When Queen Maud is not at Buckingham Palace during her English visits, she leads the life of an ordinary country lady at her Norfolk residence, Appleton House, King's Lynn. It is a wonderful place for children, and Prince Olav used to have glorious holidays there.

When I first knew him, he and our own King's sons—Prince Henry, Prince John (since dead), and the now Duke of Kent used to play soldiers together in the Appleton House grounds. They had wonderful little

entrenchments and outdoor forts, with miniature cannon and hundreds of lead soldiers. Everything was arranged according to the most modern rules of martial strategy. Natural features of the landscape, such as woods, grassy hummocks, miniature rivers and so on were all cleverly employed by the young "generals", whose leaden armies marched and counter-marched, deployed and attacked and retreated, and despite dreadful decimation were always ready for another conflict next day—a feature in which mimic wars differ tragically from real ones.

There was one inviolable rule in these little battles. The toy armies were never permitted to be of any European country. That was at a time when the Yellow Peril scare was to the forefront of the news, and also when an American astronomer claimed to have received incomprehensible messages from Mars. I think these items must have inspired the little Princes ; at least, their principal battles, as far as I can now remember, were between the Whites and the Yellows, and—more sanguinary still—between Mars and the Earth. I may add that the youngest "generals" always had to be the Yellows, and Mars, and were invariably defeated on all fronts.

At other times the Princes would dress up in cocked hats, slope wooden swords over their shoulders, and act as soldiers themselves, drilling very smartly, and saluting the "officer" of the moment with great precision.

I remember an incident which amused me very much at the time, giving a remarkable indication of the accurate way in which children copy their elders. One of the Princes—I believe it was the present Duke of Kent—had been taken to see a military tournament a little while previously. He had evidently made mental

notes of the procedure, for he produced several new orders for the squad when his next turn came to be "officer".

The marching and counter-marching continued, and at length the little army of four six- or seven-year-olds tramped on to a graceful bridge in the grounds. Prince George instantly gave a sharp command : "Company, break step while crossing bridge !" When the other side was reached, and the troops stood once more on *terra firma*, the Prince halted them, stood them at ease, and explained earnestly that large bodies of men crossing bridges always had to break step, so that the masonry should not be loosened by the rhythmic tramp of their marching feet. The army listened, and was immensely impressed.

Prince Olav, though almost the youngest of this little group of adventurers, had always an original mind. One sweltering July afternoon, when they had been discussing their distant futures, the question came round to him—"What will *you* do when you're grown up, Olav ?"

"Abolish collars !" he replied briefly and savagely.

It struck me that day as being an excellent idea, but even then I could foresee difficulties, and, alas, collars are still with us.

One morning when the Princes were playing cowboys and Indians in the grounds of Appleton House, Prince Olav made a great discovery. A bright-eyed and cheery fox-terrier from the village had somehow made its way into the grounds, and the Prince, who was always the confidant of animals, found and made friends with it. The others petted it also, and it was given some tit-bits and generally encouraged to come again.

Fox-terriers are dogs that need very little of such encouragement, and this one turned up with increasing regularity, and joined in the games as Buffalo Bill's trusty hound, or at other times as the pet dog of Sunstar the Indian chief.

Then for over a week the dog did not put in an appearance. It had been coming regularly for a time before that, and although it was not officially a part of my duties, I made inquiries in the village to see what had become of it. When children grow attached to a dog, it is a tragedy for them to lose touch with it.

I managed to discover the dog's owner, and he showed me the poor little animal, lying in a bed of straw, and looking thin and ill. It had been kicked by a horse, round whose heels it had been yelping, and although it was being treated by a vet, it did not seem to be recovering properly. It recognized me, and licked my hand pitifully and anxiously, but of course I could do nothing for it.

When the Princes heard of its plight, they were as grieved as only small boys can be over the hurt of a comrade. They discussed the matter for some time, and then Prince Olav put a finger on the crux of the trouble.

"I believe he might be worrying from not seeing us for so long," he said. "I think he'd get better if we went and made a fuss of him."

And so finally permission was obtained for the Princes to go and see the canine invalid. As a further result of their pleading, the finest veterinary attention was made available. I saw the terrier when the lads went to visit it. It wagged its tail furiously, for the first time since the accident, so the owner said. It was still very weak, but from that day it began to recover. Nor do

I think that all the credit should go to the famous "vet" who took the case in hand. It was quite obvious from the moment that Prince Olav knelt down and put his hand on its cocked silky ear that it had taken a new lease of life from reunion with its royal friends.

When the little Norwegian Prince was staying at Buckingham Palace later that same year, Queen Maud called me again into her presence.

"I should like you to take the Prince for walks and rides about London in the mornings, to see the city and the people, Mr. Fitch," she said. "It will do him good, and he is so very interested in London and its affairs."

So I made out an itinerary for Prince Olav, arranging to take him to see all the "sights of London" in which he was interested. He most wanted to see the changing-of-the-guard ceremony at Whitehall, and actually we watched that several times—it never seemed to lose interest for him. He was also anxious to visit some of our great churches and museums and galleries.

At Westminster, he studied seriously the faces of the effigies of famous dead kings and queens. The bronze statue of Henry VII, on its black marble tomb, always particularly attracted him, and he often spent as much as ten minutes at a time considering the strong, still face. The coronation chair, with its famous stone beneath, said to be the very stone on which Jacob rested his head when he dreamed of the angels' ladder from heaven to earth, was also a favourite sight in the Abbey.

But his interest was always chiefly for Londoners, rather than for London. At his own wish we invariably travelled about together by omnibus or tube ; he would not use a car. Very often in busy hours, typists, clerks, and factory workers in London must have rubbed

shoulders with this future King of Norway at bus stops and on Undergound platforms, little dreaming that the quiet, observant lad in the tweed coat was a famous Royalty from Buckingham Palace.

A platform crowded with bustling business men and girls always had a fascination for him, and Charing Cross District Station was his favourite spot, I think, in all London—perhaps in all England—though he had his choice of the Palaces.

"I wonder where all these people are going? I would love to see them in their offices and their homes!" he would say time and again.

We spent many hours on London Bridge, watching the shipping in the Pool. Any boy would have been intrigued by that sight, and how much more so the heir to the Viking throne, whose own ancestors had sailed their dragon-ships up-Thames, through the fens and marshes that now are London, and landed on Bramble Island (now Westminster) to proceed with the conquest of old England.

Far beneath us on the muddy, rippling water, we saw great ships loading and unloading, men running to and fro, and all the unceasing activities of London's silent highway. Among the life down there was one feature which always attracted the Prince's attention. It was the Cockney lads who may almost always be seen swimming and diving from the banks below the bridge.

Although some of them are so young that they can hardly walk with safety, yet they can all swim like fishes and dive like porpoises. Day in and day out, they gambol in the water, never feeling cold or heat, never apparently troubled by such mundane considerations as

food or school. They are the water-kelpies of the modern world.

Prince Olav was fascinated by their tricks and gymnastics. One day, as we were watching them, a passer-by threw down a coin into the water, and instantly half a dozen of the children beneath dived together, like seagulls after a bit of bread. They disappeared for so long that anyone unaccustomed to their underwater endurance would have been stricken with apprehension. Then one shot up, grinning and flinging the water from eyes and hair, and held the coin on high. The other heads bobbed up round him, and they chorused shrill thanks.

The Prince was delighted, and instantly his arm shot out ; there was a flashing parabola of silver, and the divers disappeared again. The coin was half a crown, and such munificence had its inevitable result. We were marked from that moment.

Subsequently, whenever we went there, the urchins would set up a chorus like hungry seabirds, and perform miracles in the water compared to which their former gambols were dull and uninteresting. Prince Olav used often to throw them coins—I fancy he must have used up quite a bit of pocket-money that way—and his generosity caused me a brief elevation to a title more surprising than any so far awarded to me as a result of my service to visiting Royalties.

One dull morning when we walked on to the bridge and looked down over the parapet, a couple of Cockney youngsters came racing up behind us, and paused a few feet away with the typical unembarrassment of their race.

"That's the Prince !" whispered one hoarsely, jerking his head at Prince Olav.

"'*Oo*'s the other, then, Jimmy?" was the avid reply. "'E's always wiv 'im; I seen 'im before. Nobby tole me 'e was a 'tec—a real Scotland Yarder, so Nobby says to me."

Jimmy, however, had other ideas. He stared at me thoughtfully a minute before replying, and then answered in a withering voice:

"'*Im* a Scotland Yarder! W'y, w'ere's yer eyes? 'E's a toff, I tell yer. I know 'oo 'e is. That's the Jook o' Norway, one o' the Prince's gentlemen-in-waitin'. You don't ketch 'tecs toffed up like that. They're a common lot, *they* are, and no perishin' herror!"

On another occasion when I was with Prince Olav in London, we were walking down towards Charing Cross, past the National Gallery, when a woman and a girl of nineteen or so, obviously mother and daughter, stepped down from the Gallery entrance and stood for a moment close beside us. They were beautifully dressed, and bore the obvious stamp of the travelling American.

"Wal, dear, that sure was a wunnerful place," said the elder lady appreciatively. "How long'd we take to get round there?"

The girl looked at a jewelled wrist-watch. "Fifteen minutes," she replied. "Them slippery floors don't let you get around no account. Where do we go next, Mamma?"

"Buckin'ham Palace, dear. We've to be there by twelve o'clock, because I'm told the Prince of Wales is due there then. I've been savin' this up for you, Myra. If we're lucky, we'll see him close to."

The girl sighed with real ecstasy. "My!" she exclaimed. "Wal, you are a dear thing! Fancy you

findin' that out and arrangin' it all for me. Oh, shucks ! Fancy, now, seein' a real prince, close to !"

And she turned immediately round on me, and asked me which bus she should catch for Buckingham Palace. I gave her some directions, and the two ladies hurried off. I have always wondered what they would have said if they had realized that they were speaking to the guardian of a royal person, and that a "real prince" stood there quietly within a couple of yards of them, aware of everything that was being said !

I have several times attended Prince Olav and Queen Maud in this country since that time, and became very much attached to the heir to the Norwegian throne —he has one of the most charming personalities I have ever known. Some years ago he sent me a photograph signed by himself, to add to my collection of royal pictures.

On one occasion, shortly after the war, Queen Maud and her suite were leaving Buckingham Palace on their way back to their own country, and I was deputed to accompany them as far as the coast. A most remarkable occurrence happened on that journey—possibly the strangest thing that has taken place within my experience as a royal detective. I tell the story here without prejudice, not expecting everyone to believe it, though it is vouched for not only by myself but by a leading detective officer formerly serving on the East Coast.

I joined the special train at Liverpool Street, having taken the usual precautions to see that no undesirable persons could cause any hitch in the proceedings. Later, I watched the London slums and suburbs slip past, and the country follow them, till we had passed Colchester and were going smoothly and fast towards Manningtree

and Parkeston Quay. Then suddenly I thought I saw someone step very swiftly past the door of my coach.

There was a curious glitter about the man's hat—I assumed it was a man because he was very tall and powerfully built, though I got no glimpse of the face and only the most fleeting idea of the figure. What puzzled me most of all was that his clothes swished in a most curious manner, quite unlike the effect produced by an ordinary suit.

I stepped instantly to the door, but there was no one in the corridor, and though I walked along it at once in the direction in which the figure had gone, the train was empty of any save its legitimate occupants, and none of them apparently had seen anything amiss.

We arrived at Parkeston Quay exactly to the scheduled minute, and the royal party left the train and went aboard. Everything seemed as usual, and the local authorities, particularly an inspector with whom I had worked in the war and whom I knew very well, assured me that nothing suspicious had occurred at that end. All the same, that fancy of mine in the train disturbed me, for I am not commonly given to imagining things that have no solid basis of fact behind them. And I doubt if anyone would accuse me of being psychic!

The ship was all ready to depart, and orders had actually been given for the removal of the gangway, when my police-inspector friend suddenly exclaimed sharply: "Who's that?"

I swung round on the instant, and caught the vaguest glimpse of a tremendous figure in red and silver as it vanished—melted would be a more descriptive word—into the ship, from the gangway's head.

Unobtrusively and swiftly, we slipped aboard and

searched that ship from stem to stern. I doubt if a rat could have hidden from us. When we finished, hot and puzzled, we were certain that our eyes had deceived us, and that a flash of light on the polished rail, or the reflection from some distant window, had caused an apparition that simply did not exist. Dissatisfied, we left the vessel, and she took her stately way out into the grey North Sea.

Years later, talking to a Norwegian of ancient family whom I happened to meet at a Rotarian dinner, I heard him mention the Red Axeman, and asked who this picturesque individual was. By the way he had spoken, I supposed that the title belonged to some sort of official about the Norwegian Court—something equivalent, possibly, to our own Gold Stick in Waiting. This is the story he told me.

"Centuries ago, in the reign of Haakon II, a prince of the royal blood was taken to sea in a war-galley, manned by traitors, and there set upon and murdered. Only one of the galley's crew remained faithful to him at the end—a gigantic warrior in a red tunic, whose axe cut down more than a dozen of the assassins before they could get to his young master.

"Within a week of the event, the heir to the Norwegian throne was leaving Stavenger by ship, this time manned by loyal followers, when the ghostly form of the great Red Axeman was seen to stalk aboard and disappear. He was recognized by a former comrade-in-arms as the man who had died defending his royal master on the traitor galley.

"Since that day the Red Axeman has often been seen going aboard a ship on which the heir to the throne of Norway has embarked. A legend has grown up that

he is there to protect the Prince and bring him safely across the grey seas that once were ploughed by the dragon-ships with which the Red Axeman himself was familiar."

I was intrigued by the legend, for a very small stretch of fancy might well transmute the flash of red and silver that we had seen on the gangway at Parkeston Quay, and that I had imagined previously on the train, into a barbaric warrior in winged hat and mail, loyally attending his Prince for ever, as reward for that gallant fight aboard the leaping galley long ago.

Later, I had an opportunity to put the theory to my friend at Harwich, and he agreed with me that it fitted the slender facts of the case as well or better than any other.

Of one thing we were both positive—the queer apparition may have been caused by some reflected flash of sunlight or other optical illusion, but it was certainly not made by any human agency. Already suspicious as we were after my experience aboard the train, nothing human could have slipped through our fingers in our subsequent searchings in such a confined place. But of course we could hardly be expected to be able to apprehend a shade of a thousand years ago.

CHAPTER XVIII

Royal visitors from the East—King Ferdinand at Buckingham Palace—A modern St. Francis—A rencontre at the Zoo—The Order of Merit of Bulgaria—A White Elephant at Buckingham Palace—King Chulalongkorn and the Cockneys—Traffic troubles in the Strand—Indian rulers in London—Cricket and gems—Royal detectives today—Kings and their peoples.

In the course of my career I have attended various Royalties from the more or less gorgeous East who have come to England to visit His Majesty. As might be expected, they find our newer civilization astounding, and are sometimes very puzzled by it, and sometimes bitterly disappointed with its restrictions.

A delightful story is told of the former Shah of Persia, who, on one of his visits to this country, expressed a desire to see a murderer hanged, and asked if the gallows could be erected in front of the Palace so that he could linger over this aesthetic delight at his ease. When it was indicated to him that such a scene could not be permitted, he good-humouredly acquiesced, and said he would go to the prison after lunch that day, and see the "performance" then. Incidentally, the miserable murderer was not due to be executed till next morning.

The Shah could not believe his ears when he was politely informed that he could not watch the hanging at all. He earnestly tried to meet the authorities half-

way by saying that he would not be very disappointed even at a mere beheading ; and on learning that not even sovereigns can interfere with the stern course of justice, or be witnesses of its penalites, he pretty plainly expressed his idea that we had carried civilization too far.

A royal person from the East who was the very opposite, both in person and manners, from the extravagant figures that fancy conjures up, was Ferdinand of Bulgaria. He came over for King Edward's funeral, and I was given charge of his safety.

Perhaps because his was a wild little country of no great pretensions, he seemed ill at ease in the glamorous and stately surroundings of Buckingham Palace. At times he was quite at a loss concerning some point of Palace etiquette, and was not ashamed to seek advice from some of the gentlemen who had been placed at his disposal while he stayed in England.

He was a quiet man, abhorring public ceremonies, and with a notable lack of the usual fondness for gay military uniforms that characterized most of our royal visitors from abroad. A dark, inconspicuous suit and a bowler hat pleased him better, and became him better, too. No one would have taken him for a Royalty—the "divinity that doth hedge a king" was conspicuous, in his case, by its absence. Yet he was considerate, courteous, and charming always. He was extraordinarily observant, and never forgot a name or a face. England fascinated him, and he never tired, during his visit, of observing the people and commenting on them as being the strength of this great country.

"I never realized what a mighty and consolidated race you English are," he said to me after King Edward's

funeral ceremonies were concluded, "until I saw you today, united by a single emotion. I would not have believed that any man in the world could have been grieved for like this. What a terrible people to arouse *against* one !"

Curiously enough, he himself aroused England against Bulgaria in the Great War, only three or four years afterwards.

In later years, the Bulgarian monarch gained the nickname of "Foxy Ferdy", but personally I liked him very much. He always had a strong taste for natural history, and might have been a great naturalist had he not been elected from Saxe-Coburg to an Eastern throne. When only a young man, he had the honour of having some natural notes on Brazilian fauna published in Vienna.

While in England he paid endless visits to the Zoo, where I was bidden to accompany him. For hours this quiet man in the sober grey suit used to watch and study the fluttering birds in the great cages, while less earnest onlookers brushed lazily by, never knowing that they were rubbing shoulders with a king.

After a couple of visits, some of the birds got to know him almost as well as their keepers. One great bald-headed condor in particular used to come hopping down and poke his hideous beak through the wire of the cage, chuckling and screaming in response to a queer sibilant hiss from the king.

"I'm certain I knew that bird in Brazil when I was out there as a lad," His Majesty used to say laughingly to me. "He followed our trail for scraps of broken meat from the table, and he used to talk to me in just the same way. And you know I never forget faces !"

I don't think anyone could have forgotten that awful bird's face, for it might have been modelled by some wizard to represent cruelty, rapacity, and greed. But it seemed kindly enough towards King Ferdinand, repulsive as it looked to me. Incidentally, I think it hated me—it always screamed furiously, flapped its wings, and snapped its beak when it saw me.

"It doesn't like you," the king used to say. "It says policemen stop murders and starvation and all that sort of thing, and rob the vulture tribe of the bodies that are their rightful prey."

Certainly the hatred was mutual between us, but the king seemed to like the bird, as, indeed, he loved any natural thing. He had a magic touch with animals ; the elephants used to lumber up towards him with a friendly flap of the ears ; lions stopped lashing their tails and lay down like sulky dogs when he spoke to them through the bars ; and the shy deer would feed from his hand. He was very happy in those hours in the Zoo.

"If only we could live as St. Francis of Assisi lived, what a happy world this would be!" he said to me one day as we came back from Regent's Park. "It is true indeed that God made the country and man made the cities!"

He walked on in silence for some time. "I hate cities and processions," he added, as if to himself, speaking very bitterly. "Sometimes they make a king's life far more miserable than that of the countryman in his cottage."

At the Zoo one morning, the king saw a man lean over the rail towards a cage in which a puma was striding up and down, growling. The man put his walking-stick between the bars and did something with it that

changed the puma's anger into a purr nearly as loud as that of a motor-cycle. I had never heard one of these great cats purr before.

"What did you do, sir?" asked the king of the stranger.

"Oh, just helped her to that bit of meat," came the reply, in the soft Virginian drawl. "The keeper had dropped it outside the cage, and the poor old tree-cat could see it lying thar and couldn't reach it. She kept reachin' through the bars, so I just moved the meat in a bit, an' she hooked it up."

"She could have reached your hand, when you leaned over, surely?" said the king curiously.

"Oh, animals never hurt you if you're helpin' them," was the assured answer.

The King and the Virginian chatted for about half an hour, while the puma purred at intervals in the cage. The talk ran on hunting in the Rockies and wild life there. After a long time, the king asked a question.

"Where have I seen you before?" he inquired. "I think it must have been in Brazil in 1879."

He was right; his memory had not played him false, though the meeting took place more than thirty years previously, and was only a brief one at that. What a detective such a man would have made!

In the course of this talk with the man from Virginia, I was reminded of a rather amusing peculiarity of King Ferdinand's that I had noticed before. Possibly because he was not very familiar with English idiom and sayings, he took note of anything that sounded like an epigram, and used it himself later on.

During that morning I had happened to quote the Latin tag *Imperat aut servit collecta pecunia cuique.* During

this subsequent talk, His Majesty made occasion to say: "Some command money, and some obey it." It was curious to hear oneself repeated in this way, but it frequently happened!

Before King Ferdinand left England, he called me to him and presented me with the Order of Merit of Bulgaria. The next time Bulgaria came to my notice officially was during the war, when the King led his country against us. I was at that time engaged in anti-espionage work on the East Coast, and received a general order to apprehend Bulgarian suspects here. Time has a habit of bringing such queer reversals into a detective's life.

Another Eastern ruler from whom I received a decoration was King Chulalongkorn of Siam. He was rather like King Alfonso in that both sovereigns, on their first visit to Buckingham Palace, were somewhat free in the dispensing of tokens of royal appreciation. I remember at least one recipient to whom the promise of an Siamese Order caused the greatest embarrassment.

King Chulalongkorn had been very much impressed with the Palace cuisine, which has a famous power of producing for the King's various visitors national dishes which they never expected to see again till they returned to their own respective homes. One day he ordered the royal butler to be brought before him to be complimented. After fruitlessly trying to persuade the official to return to Siam and take charge of the royal table there, King Chulalongkorn, whose English was very uncertain, expressed pleasure at the loyalty of one who would not for any consideration leave his own master.

"This adherence do I like to see," he announced graciously. "Thou shalt at least rate to be decorated for

table services to the Person. We shall present you with the White Elephant from Siam."

The butler was overcome with astonishment and doubt. "Thank you, Sire!" he stammered, and was soon afterwards dismissed from the royal presence. I met him a few moments later, in a state of high excitement.

"How can I possibly keep an elephant, Mr. Fitch?" he asked disgustedly. "In the Palace here, too! Anyone would think I was a menagerie keeper. Do you think they might buy a white one at the Zoo?"

I explained, with some laughter, that the King had been trying to indicate that he wished to offer the decoration of the "White Elephant of Siam".

Like all other visitors from the Orient, King Chulalongkorn was fascinated by London, the greatest city of the earth, and seat of the ruler of a mighty Eastern empire. Accompanied by members of his suite and officials like myself who had been put at his disposal during his stay, he often used to travel about the City and West End, studying the buildings and the ever-hurrying masses of people, seeing historic places of interest, and observing the crowded shipping that was for ever moving up and down the dirty waters of the Thames.

I believe King Chulalongkorn was the first ruler of Siam to come to England. He was certainly a most progressive sovereign for an Eastern, despite the fact that the whole of his early life was spent in the seclusion of a Buddhist monastery. In his own land he signalized his accession to the throne by abolishing slavery, proclaiming freedom of religion, building schools, hospitals, roads, and railways, instituting a coinage, police system, post office, and sanitation system, and abolishing the rule

which formerly made all subjects approach the king on hands and knees. In England he took every opportunity of seeing Western progressive methods, and taking records of them to study on his return to his own land.

A certain member of his entourage, perhaps not quite so familiar with our customs as was the monarch himself, once caused a little unexpected excitement in the Strand. He was an ardent photographer, and had already obtained pictures of several famous buildings, including Westminster Abbey, St. James's Palace, and so on. One morning he found something that attracted him in the buildings along the Strand, and stepped incontinently backwards off the kerb, opening his beloved camera and focusing the building in the reflector, oblivious to the traffic roaring around him on all sides.

Luckily for us all, a constable, returning I suppose from point-duty somewhere near, saw the impending tragedy and took a flying leap off the pavement into the road, frantically signalling the traffic to stop. I did the same.

The picture was taken, the absorbed photographer rejoined the royal suite, and no one save myself and the policeman, apparently, realized that the squealing brakes of cars and buses might easily have prefaced something very much more tragic than the inconvenience caused to the innumerable drivers who made faces at us from their seats !

I always thought myself that the policeman in question deserved the "White Elephant from Siam" too !

On one occasion I ventured to point out to His

Majesty some Cockney children diving from the banks under one of the London bridges into the Thames. He was fascinated by their antics, and watched them for some considerable time in silence.

"What swimmers these babies are !" he exclaimed to me. "I have seen the pearl-divers of the East, who are considered to be almost miraculous swimmers, yet these little children are as confident and as clever as the best of them. No wonder you say 'Britannia rules the waves'."

I could not help being amused at the strange adaptation of the old saying !

Quite early in my career as a royal detective I was appointed to attend a gathering of famous Eastern personalities in London, at the invitation of two great Indian rulers, the Maharaja Gaekwar and Maharani of Baroda.

The Maharaja had a history as romantic as that of any fairy-story prince. His predecessor on the throne of Baroda misgoverned the land, and at the suggestion of the then Viceroy of India, an heir to the throne was adopted from another branch of the family. He came from a humble home in the Deccan to be trained for the responsibilities of an independent crown.

The strange experiment worked wonders for the country. The new ruler was a model prince, and speedily made his land as well-governed as any British province. He and his Maharani gained the friendship of the great Queen-Empress Victoria, and later of King Edward.

Consequently the great gathering at the "Criterion" in 1910, which I was appointed to attend, was an affair of extraordinary magnificence, and was attended by numbers of people whose names were famous from East

to West. Picturesque Indian dress was worn by many of the dark-skinned guests, and wonderfully beautiful some of the women looked in it, notably the Maharani of Baroda herself.

After the guests had been received, a "Song of Welcome" was rendered by Indian musicians and singers, some speeches were made, and then there was presented the most amazing series of *tableaux vivants* I have ever seen.

They illustrated passages from the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám, and were based on the wonderful illustrations of Edmund Dulac, by permission of the artist. To anyone who knows these illustrations, it will seem hard to believe that they were equalled, if not surpassed, by the living figures that passed before us.

Some of the *tableaux* I remember vividly to this day. "Peace to Mahmud on his Golden Throne" : an extraordinary scene of Eastern magnificence, with a splendid sultan sitting amidst his courtiers, beneath waving peacock fans. "Give me a book of verse beneath a bough, a loaf of bread, a flask of wine and Thou . . ." was wonderfully pictured as a scene of dreamy Oriental contentment and philosophy.

"A Potter and his Clay" was shown as the interior of a Persian potter's dwelling, the lighting giving an uncanny reality to the vessels of red clay—some made, some in the making, some broken, scattered about on shelves and floor. And "The Angel of the Drink of Darkness" was an awesome presentation of Azrael, so stern and forbidding and inevitable as to make one grip the sides of one's chair and firmly remind oneself that the place was the prosaic "Criterion", and not some dim abyss between the worlds of dead and living.

And, last scene of all, "The Empty Glass"—an epitome of careless challenge, wise philosophy, and grim jest that I have never forgotten.

Prince Ranjitsinjhi was a guest at this gathering, and I overheard him chatting about cricket—he was, of course, famous as a Sussex player—as the party broke up. I imagine he may have been regretting long sunny days in the cricket-field at that moment, for the night was one of raw November fog, and we were all sorry to leave the bright lights of the "Criterion" for London's dismal streets after the meeting had ended.

"Ranji" was wearing a magnificent jewelled ring—one of the finest I have ever seen. Gems and Easterns go together somehow, and many of the Indian princes have won the amazement of the Western world by the magnificence and generosity of their jewel gifts.

I remember at least one Indian prince—I cannot, of course, give his name—whose reputation in this way was short-lived. He came to England on a visit, and a Special Branch detective was duly appointed to look after his safety here. At the termination of his visit, as he had given this officer a great deal of unusual extra work, he made a flowery speech of thanks for his services, and handed him a decoration that was simply one blaze of magnificent jewels.

The astounded detective, who happens to be a good friend of mine, hurried home and had a closer look at the jewels, which looked "worth a prince's ransom", according to the standard phrase. As a result of a close examination, he took the badge of his new Order to a Bond Street jeweller and had it valued.

It looked worth about £2,000, but when my friend called back later in the day, he was told that the stones

were all paste, and that thirty shillings would be the most he would get for it. He took the thirty shillings calmly, and bought a very nice briar pipe with the money. He still has that pipe, polished to a splendid black, and pulls at it reminiscently of an evening as we yarn together about our strange adventures as the guardians of kings. "Orders is Orders" is a favourite phrase of his now, but the twinkle in his eye reminds any one of us who knows the story that once, at any rate, there was an "Order" that was not really quite in order after all.

I have been asked many times since my retirement what detective work is like, and, in particular, of the future chances of a lad considering the Special Branch with a view to selection for work as a future guardian of kings. Of course there are a good many less kings nowadays than in my time, but the same service is given to visiting politicians and other notables, though the romance is not perhaps so great without the fancy of the crown in the background.

At any rate I can say this—the Special Branch offers a splendid career for any lad of exceptional intelligence and resource who is prepared to work very hard and take rather more risks, perhaps, than the ordinary detective is likely to encounter. The life is largely an open-air one, it is well paid, and carries a reasonable pension. In addition, it offers more than a spice of adventure, which is hard to come by in these prosaic days.

When I joined I knew several languages fluently. That was why I was chosen for royal detective work—because I could converse with kings and their suites in their own languages. Any novice joining the Special

Branch needs some such exceptional qualification, and particularly if he hopes ever to do royal detective work.

I have come to the end of my book, though certainly not nearly to the end of my royal reminiscences. Most of the kings and queens of our twentieth-century world flit across my memory's shadow-screen, some haunted by secret enemies, some pursued by madmen, some welcomed by the thunderous cheering of their happy subjects.

Many of those whom I have served have since been toppled from their thrones, by war or revolution or the hand of the assassin. Others have seen their kingdoms crippled. Many are exiles ; the Tsar and Tsarina have been shot ; the late King of the Belgians has died a violent death in his own mountains.

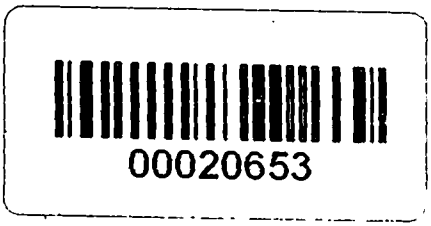
One king among them all has grown greater with the passing of the relentless years, has seen his kingdom prosper and spread, has witnessed loyalties from his Empire the like of which the world had never dreamed. He has grown dearer and nearer to the hearts of his people and, in a world of swaying monarchies, has set the British throne even more firmly on the rock of traditional constitutionalism that has yet to tremble from foreign threat or internal dissension. That monarch is George V, the King-Emperor.

As I review within my memory all those royal persons whom I have served, weighing their personalities one against another, the most human and most likable of them all is invariably the sturdy, bearded, clear-eyed figure of our own ruler. He may not flaunt the magnetism of a Mussolini or the harangue of a Hitler, but he displays a wise consideration, a prudent foresight, and a simple

courage and loyalty to ideals that make him a true pattern of a British gentleman, and the most august and truly royal master that any king's detective has ever served.

Gentlemen! The King, God bless him!

THE END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